LUNDY BANCROFT

Lundy Bancroft has twenty years of experience specializing in interventions for abusive men and the children that are exposed to them. He is the author of four books in the field, including *Why Does He Do That,* and the national prize-winner *The Batterer as Parent.* He has worked with over a thousand abusers directly as an intervention counselor, and has served as clinical supervisor on another thousand cases. He has also served extensively as a custody evaluator, child abuse investigator, and expert witness in domestic violence and child abuse cases. Lundy appears across the United States as a presenter for judges and other court personnel, child protective workers, therapists, law enforcement officials, and other audiences. Common topics that Mr. Bancroft has presented on include:

- The Batterer as Parent
- Emotional Injury and Recovery in Children Exposed to Domestic Violence
- The Profile and Tactics of Men Who Abuse Women
- Improving the Court and Probation Response to Domestic Abusers
- Improving Police and Prosecution Response to Domestic Abusers
- Accountability, Intervention, and Change for Men Who Abuse Women
- Understanding the Post-Separation Needs of Abused Women and Their Children
- Advocacy and Legal Representation for Battered Mothers in Custody and Visitation Disputes
- Performing Proper Custody Evaluation in the Presence of Abuse Reports or Allegations

THE BATTERER AS A PARENT

By Lundy Bancroft

Cite as: Bancroft, L. (Winter 2002) The batterer as a parent *Synergy*, 6(1), 6-8 (Newsletter of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges)

Research on children's exposure to domestic violence has tended to focus primarily on two aspects of their experience: the trauma of witnessing physical assaults against their mother, and the tension produced by living with a high level of conflict between their parents.[1] However, these are just two elements of a much deeper problem pervading these children's daily life, which is that they are living with a batterer. The parenting of men who batterer exposes children to multiple potential sources of emotional and physical injury, most of which have not been recognized widely.

This article looks at the characteristics of men who batter and identifies ways in which these characteristics also influence their ability to parent appropriately. Additionally, the article will address the implications of such parenting for child protective and custody determinations.

Characteristics of Men Who Batter

Most of the characteristics that are typical of men who batter have potential ramifications for children in the home. Batterers often tend toward authoritarian, neglectful, and verbally abusive child-rearing.[2] The effects on the children of these and other parenting weaknesses may be intensified by the children's prior traumatic experience of witnessing violence.[3] Consider the following selected examples of characteristics of men who batter:

Control: Coerciveness is widely recognized as a central quality of battering men,[4] and one of the areas of life heavily controlled by many men who batterer is the mother's parenting. A man who batters may cause or forbid his partner to terminate a pregnancy, overrule her parenting decisions, or assault her when he is angry over the children's behavior. Battered women are far more likely than other mothers to feel that they have to alter their parenting styles when their partners are present.[5]

Entitlement: A man who batters considers himself entitled to a special status within the family, with the right to use violence when he deems it necessary.[6] This outlook of entitlement can lead to selfish and self-centered behavior on his part. For example, he may become irate or violent when he feels that his partner is paying more attention to the children than to him. It is difficult for children to have their needs met in such an atmosphere and they are vulnerable to role-reversal, where they are made to feel responsible to take care of the battering parent.

Possessiveness: Men who batter often have been observed to perceive their partners as owned objects.[7] This possessive outlook can sometimes extend to their children, partly accounting for the dramatically elevated rates of physical abuse[8] and sexual abuse[9] of children perpetrated by batterers, and for the fact that these men seek custody of their children more often than non-battering fathers do.[10]

Other characteristics that can have an important impact on children include manipulativeness, denial and minimization of the abuse, battering in multiple relationships, and resistance to change.

Influence of Battering on Parenting

The characteristics discussed above influence the parenting of men who batter and have a negative impact on the children by:

- creating role models that perpetuate the violence
- undermining the mother's authority
- retaliating against the mother for her efforts to protect the children
- sowing divisions within the family
- using the children as weapons against the mother

Creating role models that perpetuate the violence: Boys who are exposed to domestic violence show dramatically elevated rates of battering their own partners as adolescents or adults.[11] Research suggests that this connection is a product more of the values and attitudes that boys learn from witnessing battering behavior than of the emotional trauma of being exposed to such abuse.[12] Daughters of battered women show increased difficulty in escaping partner abuse in their adult relationships.[13] Both boys and girls have been observed to accept various aspects of the batterer's belief-system,[14] including the view that victims of violence are to blame, that women exaggerate hysterically when they report abuse, and that males are superior to females.

Undermining the mother's authority: Domestic violence is inherently destructive to maternal authority because the batterer's verbal abuse and violence provide a model for children of contemptuous and aggressive behavior toward their mother. The predictable result, confirmed by many studies, is that children of battered women have increased rates of violence and disobedience toward their mothers.[15] Some battered mothers make reports of being prevented from picking up a crying infant or from assisting a frightened or injured child and of being barred from providing other basic physical, emotional, or even medical care. Interference of this kind can cause the children to feel that their mother does not care about them or is unreliable. The batterer may reinforce those feelings by verbally conditioning the children through statements such as, "Your mother doesn't love you," or, "Mommy only cares about herself."

Retaliating against her for her efforts to protect the children: A mother may find that she is assaulted or intimidated if she attempts to prevent the batterer from mistreating the children, or may find that he harms the children more seriously to punish her for standing up for them. Therefore, she may be forced over time to stop intervening on her children's behalf. This dynamic can lead children to perceive their mother as uncaring about the batterer's mistreatment of them, and can contribute to her being labeled by child protective services as "failing to protect."

Sowing divisions with the family: Some batterers use favoritism to build a special relationship with one child in the family. As some researchers have noted, the favored child is particularly likely to be a boy, and the batterer may bond with him partly through encouraging a sense of superiority to females.[16] Batterers also may create or feed familial tensions deliberately. These

manipulative behaviors are a likely factor in the high rate of inter-sibling conflict and violence observed in families exposed to battering behavior.[17]

Using the children as weapons: Many men who batter use children as a vehicle to harm or control the mother[18] through such tactics as destroying the children's belongings to punish the mother, requiring the children to monitor and report on their mother's activities, or threatening to kidnap or take custody of the children if the mother attempts to end the relationship. These parenting behaviors draw the children into the abuser's behavior pattern. Post-separation, many batterers use unsupervised visitation as an opportunity to further abuse the mother through the children.[19]

Implications for Child Protective and Custody Determinations

Determinations regarding child protection, custody, and visitation in the context of domestic violence need to be informed by an awareness of the destructive parenting behaviors exhibited by many men who batter, and their effects on children and their mothers. These behaviors have especially important implications for children who are struggling with two sets of psychological injuries, one from exposure to the battering behavior and the other from their parents' divorce or separation. Some elements to examine closely when crafting interventions for families include:

Addressing the healing needs of children: There is a wide consensus that children's recovery from exposure to domestic violence (and from divorce) depends largely on the quality of their relationship with the non-battering parent and with their siblings.[20] Therefore, in addition to safety consideration, court determinations should take into account whether the batterer is likely, based on his past and current behavior, to continue to undermine the mother's authority, interfere with mother-child relationships, or cause tensions between siblings. Because children need a sense of safety in order to heal,[21] juvenile and family court decisions may not want to include leaving the children in the unsupervised care of a man whose violent tendencies they have witnessed, even if they feel a strong bond of affection for him.

Making appropriate assessments, especially in custody determinations: A batterer's history of abusive behavior, and how such abuse reflects on his parenting, needs to be investigated carefully, assessing for the presence of any of the common problems described above and paying particular attention to that children may become a vehicle for continued abuse of the mother.[22] Courts need to ensure that custody evaluators have extensive training on the multiple sources of risk to children from custody or unsupervised contact with the abusive parent.

Safely fostering father-child relationships: Except in cases where the children are terrified of the battering parent or have been abused by him directly, children tend to desire some degree of ongoing contact with their fathers. Such contact can be beneficial as long as adequate safety measures are provided for the mother and children and the abuser is not given the opportunity to cause set-backs to the children's emotional recovery. These goals can be fostered through custody arrangements that take into full consideration the violence in the home caused by the battering parent and through the use of professionally supervised visitation, ideally based in a visitation center. Where unsupervised visitation is found to be safe, the use of relatively short visits that do not include overnight visits can reduce the batterer's ability to damage mother-child relationship, limit his negative influence on the children's behavior and value-systems, and ensure that the children feel safe and secure – while still allowing them to feel a continued connection to their father.

NOTES

1. See for example, Rossman, R., Hughes, H., & Rosenberg, M. (2000). Children and interparental violence: The impact of exposure. Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel.

2. Bancroft, L. & Silverman, J. (2002). The batterer as parent: Addressing the impact of domestic violence on family dynamics. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

3. Margolin, G., John, R., Ghosh, C., & Gordis, E. (1996). Family interaction process: An essential tool for exploring abusive relationships. In D. Cahn & S. Lloyd (Eds.), Family violence from a communication perspective (pp. 37-58). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

4. Lloyd, S., & Emery, B. (2000). The dark side of courtship: Physical and sexual aggression. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

5. Holden, G. & Ritchie, K. (1991). Linking extreme marital discord, child rearing, and child behavior problems: Evidence from battered women. Child Development, 62, 311-327.

6. Silverman, J., & Williamson, G. (1997). Social ecology and entitlements involved in battering by heterosexual college males: Contributions of family and peers. Violence and Victims, 12(2), 147-164.

7. Adams, D. (1991). Empathy and entitlement: A comparison of battering and nonbattering husbands. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. (Available from Emerge, 2380 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA, 02140.); Lloyd & Emery, op. cit.

8. E.g. Straus, M. (1990). Ordinary violence, child abuse, and wife-beating: What do they have in common? In M. Straus & R. Gelles (Eds.), Physical Violence in American Families (pp. 403-424). New Brunswick: Transition; Suh, E., & Abel, E.M. (1990). The impact of spousal violence on the children of the abused. Journal of Independent Social Work, 4(4), 27-34; and several other studies.

9. E.g. McCloskey, L.A., Figueredo, A.J., & Koss, M. (1995). The effect of systemic family violence on children's mental health. Child Development, 66, 1239-1261; Paveza, G. (1988). Risk factors in father-daughter child sexual abuse. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 3(3), 290-306; and several other studies.

10. American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family (1996). Violence and the family. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

11. Hotaling, G., & Sugarman, D. (1986). An analysis of risk markers in husband to wife violence: The current state of knowledge. Violence and Victims, 1(2), 101-124; Silverman & Williamson, op. cit.

12. Silverman & Williamson, op. cit.

13. Doyne, S., Bowermaster, J., Meloy, R., Dutton, D., Jaffe, P., Temko, S., & Mones, P. (1999). Custody disputes involving domestic violence: Making children's needs a priority. Juvenile and Family Court Journal, 50(2), 1-12; Hotaling & Sugarman, op. cit.

14. Hurley, D.J., & Jaffe, P. (1990). Children's observations of violence: II. Clinical implications for children's mental health professionals. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 35(6), 471-476.

15. Jaffe, P., & Geffner, R. (1998). Child custody disputes and domestic violence: Critical issues for mental health, social service, and legal professionals. In G. Holden, R. Geffner, & E. Jouriles (Eds.), Children exposed to marital violence: Theory, research, and applied issues (pp. 371-408). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association; Dutton, M.A. (1992). Empowering and healing the battered woman. New York: Springer.

16. See for example Johnston, J., & Campbell, L. (1993b). Parent-child relationships in domestic violence families disputing custody. Family and Conciliation Courts Review, 31(3), 282-298. (Johnston & Campbell seem to overlook the implications of many of their own observations - see Bancroft & Silverman, op. cit., for an extended discussion.)

17. Hurley & Jaffe, op. cit.

18. Erickson, J., & Henderson, A. (1998). "Diverging realities: Abused women and their children. In J. Campbell (Ed.), Empowering survivors of abuse: Health care for battered women and their children (pp. 138-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

19. Bancroft & Silverman, op. cit.

20. See review of studies in Heller, S., Larrieu, J., D'Imperio, R., & Boris, N. (1998). Research on resilience to child maltreatment: Empirical considerations. Child Abuse and Neglect, 23(4) 321-338.

21. van der Kolk, B., & McFarlane, A. (1996). The black hole of trauma. In B. van der Kolk, A. McFarlane, & L. Weisaeth (Eds.), Traumatic stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body, and society (pp. 3-23). New York: Guilford.

22. For a detailed assessment guide, see Chapter 7 of Bancroft & Silverman, op. cit.

To our Honorable Michigan Legislators:

Thank you for a sharing your time with the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) today. We are pleased to have this opportunity to share information about our organization and issue with you, as well as the particular expertise of Mr. Lundy Bancroft. Mr. Bancroft is a nationally recognized expert in the field of domestic violence, especially in regards to issues regarding children. We are extremely grateful for the generous support of the Kellogg Foundation, which has enabled us to bring Mr. Bancroft to work with us here in Michigan. Background information on Mr. Bancroft, including copies of some of his articles can be found in this packet.

MCADSV is committed to providing state and local policymakers with knowledgeable and pertinent expertise, research and statistics on all issues relating to domestic and sexual violence. Please remember that I and the MCADSV staff are available to you and your staff as a resource, and that we look forward to working with you to continue promoting policies and initiatives to protect victims of domestic and sexual violence and strengthen the programs that serve them.

Sincerely,

Kathy Hagenian

Executive Policy Director
Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 3893 Okemos Road, Suite B-2, Okemos, Michigan 48864
Ph: 517-347-7000 Fax: 517-347-1377 E-mail: general@mcadsv.org

In 2007, the MCADSV statewide network of programs provided emergency shelter services to 63,857 survivors of domestic and sexual violence and responded to 104,664 crisis calls from individuals seeking support.

MCADSV is a leader in Michigan in our efforts toward social change organizing and movement building. MCADSV needs your help in our efforts to create the social change needed to ensure that our children and grandchildren will inherit a world where fear does not exist and where domestic violence and sexual assault is unthinkable. Join our powerful movement by giving to the Apple Blossom Fund online at www.mcadsv.org.

For more information on how to join our movement, contact us via e-mail at general@mcadsv.org. MCADSV is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your donation is tax deductible to the extent of the law.

MCADSV
Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

3893 Okemos Rd., Suite B2, Okemos, MI 48864

Phone: (517) 347-7000 Fax: (517) 347-1377
TTY: (517) 381-8470

World Wide Web: www.mcadsv.org

If you are in need of support, call your local domestic violence or sexual assault program, or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1.800.799.SAFE (7233) or 1.800.787.3224 (TTY) or Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) at 1.800.656.HOPE (4673).

MCADSV
Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

empowerment

justice support

justice

empowerment

safety

justice

support

safety

our mission

MCADSV is a statewide membership organization whose members represent a network of over 70 domestic and sexual violence programs and over 200 allied organizations and individuals. We have provided leadership as the statewide voice for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and the programs that serve them since 1978.

MCADSV is dedicated to the empowerment of all the state's survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Our mission is to develop and promote efforts aimed at the elimination of all domestic and sexual violence in Michigan.

our goals...

- Provide statewide leadership on public policy issues affecting survivors and the programs that serve them.
- Promote comprehensive, community based social change efforts to end domestic and sexual violence and build peaceful communities.
- Promote the availability and accessibility of high-quality, culturally-relevant, domestic and sexual violence services and prevention programs.
- Build capacity for community-specific solutions to ending domestic and sexual violence.
- Encourage the leadership of women.

Advancing a clear and compelling vision for our policy and programming work...

This includes aggressively advancing our state and national policy agenda and providing leadership, technical assistance, training and resources throughout Michigan to benefit domestic and sexual violence survivors. These activities include:

- Promoting survivor, advocacy and prevention priorities by advancing our state and national policy agenda such as:
  - Participating in the introduction of legislation aimed at providing a state funding source for local Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Programs.
  - Mobilizing support for the 2005 Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA 2005).
  - Adding protection for survivors of violence in dating relationships by working to pass Public Act 105 of 2005. It is critical that the law recognize dating violence, which occurs in the intimate relationships of persons ranging in age from pre-teen through adulthood. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the highest rates of domestic violence affect women ages 16-24 (U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics Factbook).
  - Stalking Laws (1993); the 24-bill Domestic Violence Reform Package (1994); the Personal Protection Order Package (1995); securing 1.5 million dollars in funding for the operation of sexual assault prevention and intervention programs (2000); and the Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Task Force Legislative Package (2001).
- Providing comprehensive issue-based training and technical assistance to advocates, allied professionals, and local and state organizations to improve the delivery of services to domestic and sexual violence survivors.
- Promoting public awareness for survivor services and prevention activities through special projects, events and awareness campaigns.
- Serving on statewide and national task forces, committees and workgroups to improve community and system responses to domestic and sexual violence.
- Producing state-of-the-art newsletters, manuals and other written publications on domestic and sexual violence issues.
- Acting as a catalyst for innovative, long-range plans to end domestic and sexual violence, and lead in the development and monitoring of state and national legislation.
- Operating, in collaboration with the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, the Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

our member programs...

Member program services and activities include:

- Comprehensive, community-based, social change efforts to end domestic and sexual violence
- 24-hour crisis intervention hotlines
- Advocacy, counseling and support groups
- Outreach and public education
- Legal advocacy/court accompaniment
- Forensic nurse examiner programs
- Emergency safe shelter
- Children's programming

MCADSV

Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

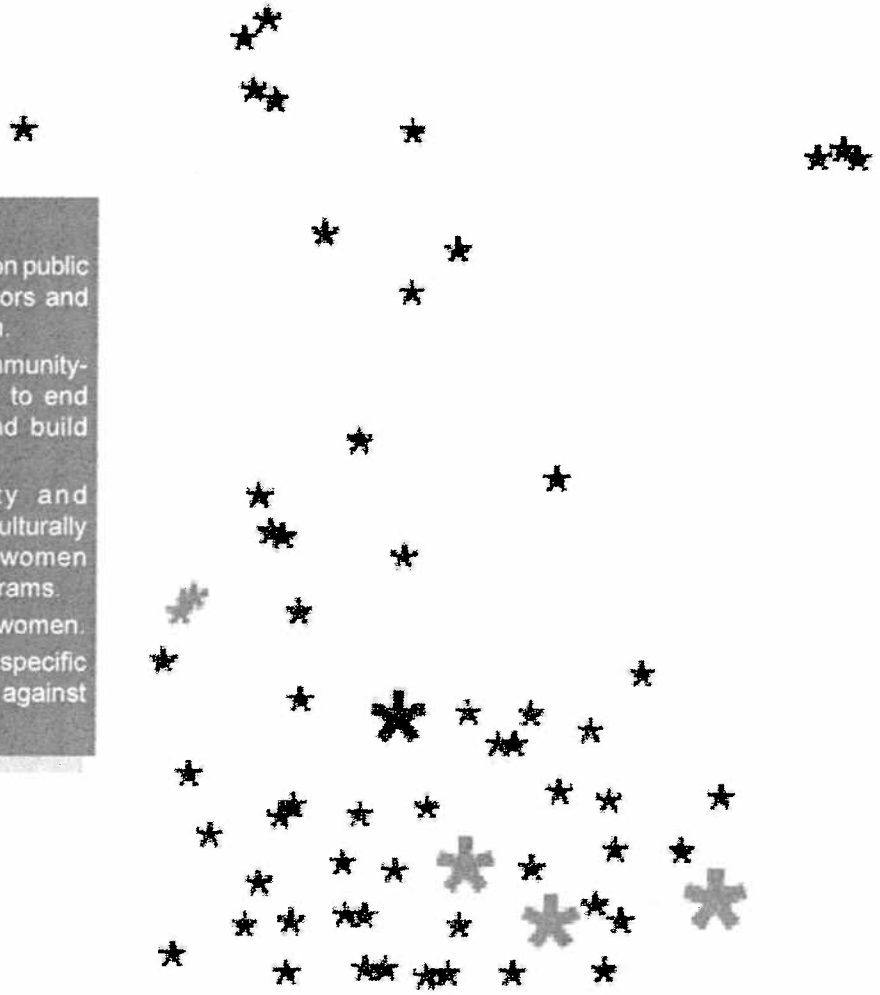
Working to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) is a statewide membership organization whose members represent a network of over 70 domestic and sexual violence programs and over 200 allied organizations and individuals. Since 1978, we have provided leadership as the statewide voice for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and the programs that serve them.

MCADSV is dedicated to the empowerment of all the state's survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Our mission is to develop and promote efforts aimed at the elimination of all domestic and sexual violence in Michigan.

Over seventy community based social change and service provider programs throughout Michigan benefit from the leadership and services of MCADSV.



OUR GOALS

- Provide statewide leadership on public policy issues affecting survivors and the programs that serve them.
- Promote comprehensive, community-based social change efforts to end violence against women and build peaceful communities.
- Promote the availability and accessibility of high quality, culturally relevant, violence against women services and prevention programs.
- Encourage the leadership of women.
- Build capacity for community specific solutions to ending violence against women.

Member program services and activities include:

- Comprehensive, community-based, social change efforts to end violence against women
- 24-hour crisis intervention hotlines
- Counseling and support groups
- Outreach and public education
- Legal advocacy/court accompaniment
- Forensic nurse examiner programs
- Emergency shelter
- Children's programming

In 2007, the MCADSV statewide network of programs provided emergency shelter services and/or crisis counseling to 63,857 survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence, and responded to 104,664 crisis calls from individuals seeking support.

Our vision is to be a catalyst for creating empowered, transformed individuals, partnerships, communities and societies committed to respectful collaborative processes that promote a lasting legacy of equality, peace and social justice!

Vision Statement of the 15 State DELTA Collaborative Between State Coalitions and the Division of Violence Prevention Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

MCADSV's Building the Safety Net Project

MCADSV announced the inception of the Building the Safety Net Project, a three year technical assistance and capacity building program for a growing network of domestic violence service providers serving survivors in Detroit and surrounding areas. The Building the Safety Net Project was made possible through the generous support of the McGregor Fund and Michigan State Housing and Development Authority. The Building the Safety Net Project aims to strengthen community-based efforts to build and sustain lasting solutions to the daunting need for domestic violence services in Detroit. Paula Callen was appointed Project Director, managing the Project through the MCADSV satellite office in the Samaritan Center in Detroit. Program partners participating in the collaboration include the Detroit-based programs YWCA Interim House, Serenity Services, Looking for My Sister, La VIDA, ACCESS and New Visions based in Ann Arbor.

LBGTQI Needs Assessment Project

MCADSV obtained a seed grant from the Michigan State University Violence Against Women Initiative to launch a needs assessment project aimed at measuring the gaps and barriers survivors from the LBGTQI communities face when reaching out for help. This assessment process is the first step in a larger, more comprehensive project sponsored by the MCADSV LBGT & Allies Task Force. Building on this effort, in 2008 project leaders look forward to finalizing a partnership with the Arcus Foundation. Partners from the domestic and sexual violence service provider community will benefit from an extensive training and technical assistance program to assist them in their efforts to become inclusive of LBGTQI individuals.

Training on Hip-Hop and Violence Against Women

Negative images of communities of color and women continue to be mainstays in all forms of media including music. Gangster Rap, a sub-genre of Hip-Hop, perpetuates myths and stereotypes that are detrimental particularly to Black communities. The MCADSV Women of Color Task Force took on the issue by hosting a critical dialogue on the topic with advocates from across the state titled Hip-Hop and You Don't Stop: An Exploration of "Gangster Rap" and The Movement to End Violence Against Women. The workshop was held April 6, 2007 in Okemos and addressed some of the elements and history of Hip-Hop using the film, Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes by Director Byron Hurt. Co-facilitated by Women of Color Task Force steering committee member Kalimah Johnson and MCADSV staff Chéree Thomas, the workshop was a coordinated effort to explore the genre and the messages that often spew misogyny and homophobia and perpetuates violence toward women and children of color. The co-facilitators assert that the messages put forth by Gangster Rappers may not necessarily represent the views of those artists. The messages of racism, sexism and homophobia are a direct reflection of those who control the music industry and profit from promoting stereotypical images of African American women and men. The use of their privilege allows producers and industry moguls to send messages of hatred to marginalized communities without repercussion. Immediately following the workshop several Task Force members attended the Hip-Hop Summit scheduled in Detroit on April 14, 2007 to make their presence known and call for an end to the destructive images of women of color in Hip-Hop and Gangster Rap.

Building the Safety Net Partner Meeting

Institute on Domestic Violence in African American Community Conference

Courage and Action: The Survivors' Giving Circle

The Survivors' Giving Circle, an economic justice program made possible by the Allstate Foundation and the John and Faith Knight Foundation blossomed 2007. The program became firmly established in local communities as an essential resource for survivors facing economic barriers to safety and justice. In addition, the leadership potential of the survivors participating grew exponentially with several opportunities for them to share their stories with key policy makers at the state and national level.

MCADSV Brings the Voice of Survivors to Washington D.C.

The Voices of Courage and Action Project brought several of the Giving Circle members to Washington D.C. to share their stories with members of Congress. The Michigan Congressional delegation was given the opportunity to listen to these amazing and powerful women as they shared their stories of courage and survival. Giving Circle members shared the individual challenges they met on the road to safety and justice. Barriers identified included housing, transportation, lack of access to attorneys, the fear of uprooting children, perpetrators owning firearms, any other deadly barriers. Survivors were also able to share how crucial the services they received from domestic violence advocates and programs. Of the many highlights, a personal tour of the Capitol was very memorable.

MCADSV Policy Team in Action

It was a busy and active year of advocacy on behalf of survivors in Michigan by the MCADSV Policy team. Led by Kathy Hagenian, MCADSV Executive Policy Director, victories in the policy arena included securing desperately needed funding to support services for survivors.

MCADSV Brings the Voice of Survivors to Coalition for Michigan's Housing and Community Development Fund

MCADSV joins the Coalition for Michigan's Housing and Community Development Fund, a new coalition of 30 community development groups, community action agencies as well as Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), Habitat for Humanity of Michigan and others. The coalition supports the Michigan Housing and Community Development Fund which received its first allocation by the legislature of $2.2 million. MCADSV brought the voice of survivors to this important economic justice initiative. The MCADSV Survivor Giving Circle members participated in Advocacy Day in May 2007, bringing their stories of economic hardship to the Capitol. Finding affordable and supportive housing is a critical first step in building options for survivors of domestic and sexual violence on their path to safety and justice. In addition, housing is instrumental to Michigan's economic future. Increased funding for affordable housing and for sustaining neighborhoods in the state's more distressed areas is essential for Michigan's revitalization.

Survivor Giving Circle Greeting National Spokeswomean for Allstate Economic Justice Project Barbara Stanny

Survivor Giving Circle Tour Nation's Capital

Survivor Giving Circle Members Sharing Their Stories

Continued Collaboration to Further Housing Options for Survivors

MCADSV continued its ongoing work with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), Office of Supportive Housing and Homeless Initiatives to advance the housing needs of survivors of domestic violence and their children through its Domestic Violence Housing Initiative. MSHDA allocated another four million dollars in 2007 targeted to the development of permanent supportive housing for victims of domestic violence who are homeless. For this initiative, MSHDA has partnered with MCADSV, Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board (MDVPTB) and Department of Human Services (DHS). This initiative is intended to build upon the strength of existing local partnerships in order to create permanent housing solutions for victims of domestic violence who are homeless.

Apple Blossom Award Recipient Honored

The MCADSV Apple Blossom Award was presented to Vickie Frederick-Toure, Program Services Director for SAFE House Center in Ann Arbor. The Apple Blossom Award honors domestic violence and sexual assault advocates who have demonstrated outstanding efforts to end domestic and sexual violence against women in Michigan, with a particular emphasis on statewide impact and advancing the mission of MCADSV. Vickie has been employed since 1995 at SAFE House Center. She previously served as the Family First Supervisor during which time she provided intensive, direct home-based prevention services to multi-problem families coming to the shelter. "I have had the honor to work with Ms. Frederick-Toure in a variety of capacities both in Washtenaw County, and on a statewide basis. We worked as co-chairs for the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence Women of Color Task Force. We served in this leadership capacity for five years, and worked to build the capacity of the Women of Color Task Force and develop leadership from within to take over the reins in 2002," says Denise Diggs-Taylor. Vickie is a quiet, compassionate leader and her commitment to children and families living with domestic violence is unwavering. As a current trainer for the MCADSV New Service Provider Training, she shares her wisdom and experience with many new workers in the field.

2007 Harmony Award Recipients

The Harmony Award was presented by the MCADSV Women of Color Task Force to honor and recognize two outstanding women who have achieved tremendous leadership capacity not only among their peers but within their organization. The 2007 Harmony honors were presented to Cathy Brown and Migdalia Goralewicz. These two exceptional women were recognized by their colleagues as women who give unselfishly to this movement. Cathy Brown of Domestic and Sexual Abuse Services in Three Rivers and Migdalia Goralewicz of Every Woman's Place in Muskegon have been doing this work for a combined total of over 20 years.

Inaugural Seedling Award

The MCADSV Children's Task Force was proud to announce Ms. Adrienne Gasperoni as the recipient of the first annual Seedling Award. The award was developed to honor professional staff at domestic violence and sexual assault service provider agencies who have demonstrated outstanding children's advocacy within their agency and/or community by "cultivating and nurturing the voice of children." The award acknowledges the unique and special role children's advocates play in the healing of individuals and families that have experienced domestic and sexual violence. Adrienne is currently the Director of Youth and Family Programs at Turning Point, Inc. in Mt. Clemens.

Survivor Giving Circle on Capitol Steps for Housing Trust Fund


Survivor Giving Circle at Capitol

Apple Blossom Award Winner Vickie Frederick-Toure is pictured with Jackie Burse, Mary Keefe and Kathy Hagenian

DELTA Project

The MCADSV Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances (DELTA) project successfully completed its fifth year of CDC funding for this groundbreaking national demonstration program on prevention. This project enables MCADSV and 13 other states to provide training, technical assistance and funding to four local communities to support their primary prevention initiatives. These four communities are: the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (Dearborn), the Lakeshore Alliance Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (Ottawa County), LA VIDA/Southwest Detroit Partnership to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence Against Latina Women, and New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in Asian/Asian American Communities (Ann Arbor).

Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence

MCADSV continues to support the implementation of primary prevention activities in local communities and across the state of Michigan through funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Community Health. Primary prevention is the prevention of first time perpetration or first time victimization. MCADSV staff participated in national and regional trainings and meetings and contributed to individual and organizational capacity building for member agencies. To support this capacity building staff facilitated a number of primary prevention training and technical assistance opportunities to MCADSV members and community partners, including: Program Planning and Logic Model Development, Conducting Needs Assessments, Engaging Diverse Communities in Preventing Violence Against Women, and Incorporating Prevention Into Our Daily Lives.

Beyond Taking a Stand

The Beyond Taking a Stand initiative incorporates an important commitment to increasing the visibility and the role of men in the work to end violence against women and children. This initiative asks men to move beyond "taking a stand" and into taking action against violence against women. In addition, MCADSV and the Batterers Intervention Services Coalition of Michigan co-hosted a keynote presentation by Ted Bunch of A Call to Men. The mission of A Call to Men is to develop a national movement of men committed to ending violence against women by working together to challenge the social norms that support sexism and violence in our communities. Through opportunities and efforts like these, MCADSV is working to support local and statewide organizing, building on successes in local communities who have hosted similar trainings and presentations while encouraging other communities to launch men as allies campaigns.

MCADSV Vision for Prevention in Michigan:

Every community in Michigan will be intolerant of acts of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse against women.

DELTA Partner LAVIDA Art Show

DELTA Partner LAVIDA Art Show Collages

Good Questions on Healthy Relationships at DELTA Partner New Visions Teen Theatre

Training and Technical Assistance

Skill Building Training Programs

MCADSV provides comprehensive issue-based training and technical assistance to advocates, allied professionals, and local and state organizations to improve the delivery of services to domestic and sexual violence survivors. During 2007, 649 individuals received training through the following professional training opportunities: New Service Provider Training, Leadership Institute, Professional Development Institute, Women of Color Institute, Building on the Basics, as well as Advocacy Works and Conflict Management that were created in response to the needs of service providers. The Advocacy Works training was designed under the premise that advocacy is the heart and foundation of our work. A commitment to using our organizational power to make sure survivors get what they need is what sets us apart from traditional social services. The two-day training focused on reconnecting us to the power of individual and systems advocacy and developing advanced strategies for navigating complex systems on behalf of survivors. The Applying Empowerment Principles While Managing Conflict training was created to assist advocates in managing conflict while going about their day to day work in the midst of crisis, and in communal living situations, support groups or in attempting to provide one-on-one advocacy.

Innovation through the Nonprofit Legal and Management Assistance Program: Strengthening Capacity for Domestic and Sexual Violence Programs

The Nonprofit Legal and Management Assistance Program (NLMAP) provided confidential legal services and management consultation to MCADSV member programs. NLMAP continues its aim to educate and prepare agency directors to manage the risk of employment and operational liability, allowing the program to better serve survivors within the state of Michigan. During 2007, the NLMAP Program Director provided over 1182 hours of management and legal consultation to member programs through on-site visits, telephone consultation, e-mail, teleconferencing, and web-based seminars. This unique program has significantly advanced the MCADSV strategic goal of enhancing the capacity of local programs to provide culturally competent, high quality services for survivors.

Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Michigan Resource Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence enhances the capacity of individuals and organizations to prevent violence against women and strengthen service delivery for survivors. This unique collection of books, videos, journals and other media promotes awareness and increases accessibility of educational information and resources for the state of Michigan. Fiscal year 2007 was a strong year for the Resource Center with access being enhanced through an online database. Increased outreach activities and new marketing initiatives led to increased resource requests and over 7,957 web hits in 2007. The collection is managed by the MCADSV as a collaborative project with the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.

MCADSV at NNEDV Lobby Day Congressional Breakfast

VERIFICATION OF FINANCIAL STABILITY

Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence audited statement of revenue and expenses for fiscal year ending September 30, 2007.

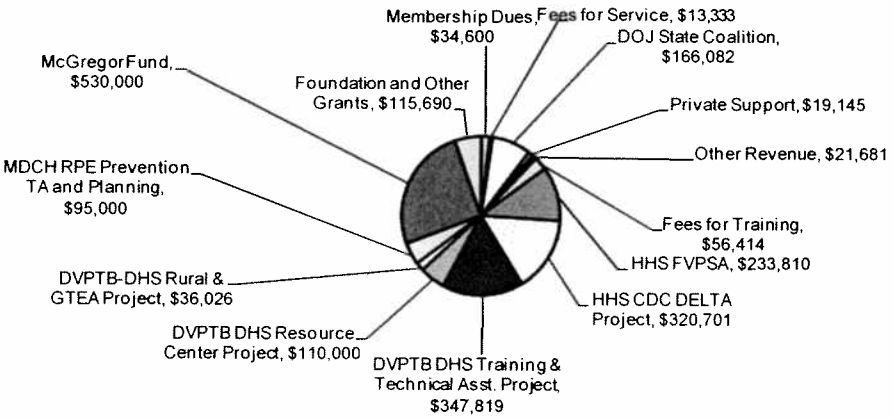
MCADSV ended the fiscal year in a strong financial position, with net assets of $827,651 at the end of the year.

Total Revenue: $2,080,616
Total Expenses: $1,612,776

From Audited Statement for year ending September 30, 2007

Revenue	
Membership Dues	$34,600
Fees for Service	$13,333
DOJ State Coalition	$166,082
Private Support	$19,145
Other Revenue	$21,681
Fees for Training	$56,414
HHS FVPSA	$233,810
HHS CDC DELTA Project	$320,701
DVPTB DHS Training & Technical Asst. Project	$347,819
DVPTB DHS Resource Center Project	$110,000
DVPTB-DHS Rural & GTEA Project	$36,026
MDCH RPE Prevention TA and Planning	$95,000
McGregor Fund	$530,000
Foundation and Other Grants	$115,690
	$2,100,301

Revenues Fiscal Year 2007



Mary Keefe and Congressman Mike Rogers Discussing Full Funding for VAWA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – FY 2007

President
Joyce Siegel, President
Program Director
Sexual Assault Services of Calhoun County

Vice President
Sue Coats
Executive Director
Turning Point

Treasurer
Donna Cornwell
Executive Director
Center for Women in Transition

Member-at-Large
Ortencia Ruiz Bos
Holland, MI

Member-at-Large
Hope Lovell
Lansing, MI

Member-at-Large
Tina Bryant
Clinical Social Worker
Detroit Medical Center-Children's Hospital of Michigan

Member-at-Large
Chris Krajewski
Program Director
Women's Resource Center of Northern MI

Member-at-Large
Lori Jump
Grants Manager
Advocacy Resource Center

Member-at-Large
Jacqueline Burse
Domestic Violence Therapist
Lighthouse Path

Member-at-Large
Rhonda Weathers
Executive Director
Cadillac Area OASIS/Family Resource Center

Member-at-Large
Hazel Satterly
Executive Director
Alliance Against Violence & Abuse, Inc.

MCADSV STAFF

Paula Callen • *Building the Safety Net Project Director*
Romy Fitschen • *Fiscal Director*
Angelita Velasco Gunn • *Associate Director*
Kathleen Hagenian • *Executive Policy Director*
Dustin Hartigan • *Technology and Operations Director*
Sarah Jarous • *Data and Member Specialist*
Management Assistant
Mary Keefe • *Executive Director*
Tammy Lemmer • *Program Manager*
Melissa Limon Flegler • *Resource Center Coordinator*
Lynn Lucas • *Marketing and Events Manager*
Janine ManDeville • *Accounting Assistant*
Cheryl Rogers • *Director, Nonprofit Legal and Management Assistance Project*
Chéree Thomas• *Program Manager*
Angie Weller • *Program Services Assistant*
Lisa Winchell • *Executive Administrative Assistant*

MCADSV
Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
3893 Okemos Rd., Ste. B2
Okemos, MI 48864
Ph: (517) 347-7000
Fax: (517) 347-1377
TTY: (517) 381-8470
E-mail: general@mcadsv.org
www.mcadsv.org

Child Custody and Domestic Violence

- The most important protective resource to enable a child to cope with exposure to domestic violence is a strong relationship with a competent, caring positive adult—most often a parent. (Osofsky, J.D., 1999).

- A burgeoning literature on children exposed to partner violence has consistently identified negative effects on a range of child adjustment outcomes for many children (Jaffe, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1990; Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt & Kenny, 2003; Wolfe, Crooks, Lee, McIntyre-Smith, & Jaffe, 2003).

- There is a tension between two recent and important developments in the area of child custody; on one hand, we have come to recognize the important role that fathers play in raising children as a cooperative parent with mothers after separation, however, on the other hand, some fathers may not qualify for this role on the grounds of being a perpetrator of partner violence and all that implies about their parenting. (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002).

- Because women are far more likely to be killed, injured, or living in fear following separation from an abusive partner, the focus in the field has been on abused women and their children (Johnson & Bunge, 2001). Based on our clinical and research experience with divorcing families engaged in the justice system, partner violence tends to be overlooked or minimized in an effort to settle matters as if there were two cooperative parents. (Jaffe & Crooks, 2004).

- An abusive spouse is seen to be an inappropriate role model for children and may inflict direct abuse on the child given the overlap of partner violence and child maltreatment (Edleson, 1999). As well, it is recognized that an abused woman may be most at risk of harm during separation, and require safety planning rather than forced contact with the perpetrator (Campbell, Sharps, & Glass, 2001). In fact, many observers in the field indicate that perpetrators of partner violence may utilize child custody and visitation disputes as a means of punishing and maintaining some control over their ex-spouse (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Jaffe, Lemon et al., 2003.)

- In every proceeding where there is at issue a dispute as to the custody of a child, a determination by the court that domestic or family violence has occurred raises a rebuttable presumption that it is detrimental to the child and not in the best interest of the child to be placed in sole custody, joint legal custody, or joint physical custody with the perpetrator of family violence. (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 1994, p.33)

- Joint custody—an arrangement whereby both parents retain and share custody rights—appears to be an appropriate arrangement for parents who are committed to making it work out of love for their children, who are willing and able to negotiate differences, and who are able to separate their roles as spouses or partners from their roles as parents (Elkin, 1987). However, as Saunders (1994) points out, a parent who has a history of control and domination during the relationship is unlikely to comply with an egalitarian system of decision-making post divorce.

REFERENCES

Bancroft, L., & Silverman, J. (2002) *The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Partner Violence on Family Dynamics.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.

Campbell, J.C., Sharps, P., & Glass, N. (2001) *Risk Assessment for Intimate Partner Homicide.* In G.F. Pinard & L. Pagani (Eds.), Clinical Assessment of Dangerousness: Empirical contributions (pp. 136-157). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Elkin, M. (1987) *Joint Custody: Affirming that Parents and Families are Forever.* Social Work, 32, 18-24.

Edleson, J.L. (1999) *The Overlap Between Child Maltreatment and Women Battering.* Violence Against women, 5, 134-154.

Jaffe, P.G., Wolfe, D.A., & Wilson, S.K. (1990) *Children of Battered Women.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Jaffe, P.G., Lemon, N.K.D., & Poisson, S.E. (2003) *Child Custody and Partner Violence: A Call for Safety and Accountability.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Jaffe, P.G. & Crooks, C.V. (2004) *Partner Violence and Child Custody Cases: A Cross-National Comparison of Legal Reforms and Issues.* Violence Against Women, 10, 917-934.

Johnston, J.R. (1994) *High-Conflict Divorce.* Future of Children, 4, 165-182.

Kitzmann, K.M., Gaylord, N.K., Holt, A.R., & Kenny, E.D. (2003) *Child Witness to Partner Violence: A Meta-analytic review.* Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71, 339-352.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. (1994) *Model Code on Domestic and Family Violence.* Reno, NV: Author.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. (2003) *Synergy*, Vol. 7, No.2.

Osofsky, J.D. (1999) *The Impact of Violence on Young Children.* The Future of Children: Domestic Violence and Children, 9(3), 38.

Saunders, D.G. (1994) *Child Custody Decisions in Families Experiencing Woman Abuse.* Social Work, 39, 51-59.

Wolfe, D.W., Crooks, C.V., Lee, V., McIntyre-Smith, A., & Jaffe, P.G. (2003) *The Effects of Exposure to Partner Violence on Children: A Meta-analysis and Critique.* Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 6, 171-187.

Recognizing Initiatives Toward Ending Sexual and Domestic Violence

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 ~ 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

We welcome you to a reception honoring Michigan Legislators, co-sponsored by the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board (MDVPTB), the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCADSV) and the following members of the Senate and House Leadership:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MIKE BISHOP
SENATE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER ALAN CROPSEY
SENATE MINORITY LEADER MICHAEL PRUSI
SENATE MINORITY FLOOR LEADER BUZZ THOMAS
HOUSE SPEAKER ANDY DILLON
HOUSE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER KATHY ANGERER
HOUSE MINORITY LEADER KEVIN ELSENHEIMER
HOUSE MINORITY FLOOR LEADER DAVE HILDENBRAND

Our Program begins at 6:00 p.m. with two brief presentations:

New Michigan Initiatives to Protect Sexual Assault Victims
THE HONORABLE AMY RONAYNE KRAUSE – Chair, MDVPTB, Judge 54-A District Court
Emerging Issues in Protecting Children in Domestic Violence Situations
LUNDY BANCROFT – Author, Leading National Expert: Children and Domestic Violence

Thank you for joining us to acknowledge Michigan's successes; promote future initiatives and recognize April as **Sexual Assault Awareness Month**.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to Karoub Associates for hosting this event, to Capitol Services for their logistical support and our deep gratitude to the Kellogg Foundation for their generous support of this event.

MICHIGAN
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
PREVENTION &
TREATMENT BOARD

MCADSV

Jeffrey L. Edleson, Ph.D.

Do No Harm

One of the things I try to teach my students is always to consider the unintended consequences of our work.

I directly experienced this lesson as I witnessed a rookie police officer try to arrest my neighbor, who had just been beaten by her estranged husband, and then try to send her two daughters to temporary foster care. You see, my neighbor's husband—who had just beaten up his wife—had called the police and reported her for spouse abuse as she fled with her children for the safety of another neighbor's house. The police officer said he was just following the city's mandated arrest policy as he had so well learned it in recent training by a local domestic violence agency.

Some of our best-intended interventions often end up doing harm to those we hope to help. I have especially witnessed this as I have devoted more and more time to the overlap between child maltreatment and woman battering in the same families. Let me offer some specific examples which have been described to me as I travel the country visiting programs and talking to people about their work.

Courts

Juvenile court judges have talked about learning of criminal domestic assault charges against a father only after they had awarded him full or joint custody. They would have awarded custody differently in each family's case, with much more stringent visitation supervision, had they learned of the criminal court case proceedings in time. Similarly, criminal court judges speak of cases in which they were presented evidence of the adult domestic assault but nothing about the safety of children living in the home, only to discover later that these children were also being abused by the perpetrator. The consequences for the male abuser might have been more certain had the added information on children's exposure to violence been presented to them. Courts are aware that sharing of case information between them is a problem. This is why more and more courts are developing sophisticated record-keeping systems which alert one court of another's proceedings with the same family members; are seeking vertical prosecution; or are designing unified courts where one judge handles all charges related to one family. In Miami-Dade County's Juvenile Court, battered women's advocates have been added to the staff in order to aid identified adult victims who appear in their system. San Diego's Children's Hospital provides advocates who work with battered mothers through a variety of court proceedings, both criminal and juvenile.

Child Protection

I have seen child protection agencies take steps, supposedly in the best interest of a child, that ended up assuring neither the child nor the victimized mother of safety. For example, a growing awareness of research results has led child protection agencies to become more concerned about the effects on children of witnessing adult domestic violence. Such agencies often assume that, by leaving her partner and obtaining a temporary restraining order, a mother will assure her children's safety and her own. Mothers are told to obtain a restraining order to retain custody of their children or be reunited with them. Sometimes the order may help to achieve safety; other times the intervention of the criminal justice system may actually escalate an abuser's anger and dangerous behavior toward the woman.

Another strategy sometimes used in child protection agencies is to increase the pressure on battered mothers by more frequently coding their cases as "failure to protect" or having them charged with "child endangerment." This type of action tends to place still larger burdens on battered mothers and often leaves male perpetrators untouched. This response does not seem logical given the data on men's danger to children. For example, Pecora and his colleagues (1992) have reviewed several sets of data and concluded that "most families involved in child fatalities were two-person caretaker situations

where a majority of the perpetrators were the father of the child or the boyfriend of the mother" (Pecora et al., 1992, p. 110). Similarly, reviews of Oregon cases have found that abuse-related child fatalities were most often committed by male perpetrators (Oregon Department of Human Resources, 1995). Escalating the formal pressures on a battered mother without offering sufficient protection for her and her children may actually increase the danger to them. Statewide efforts in Massachusetts and Michigan now aim to make the safety of mothers and their children the goal of child protection and family preservation services. Where efforts have focused on both mother's and child's safety, the systems have found their goals achieved more efficiently than when mother's safety was mostly ignored (Hangen, 1994).

(a) strategy sometimes used in child protection agencies is to increase the pressure on battered mothers by more frequently coding their cases as "failure to protect" or having them charged with "child endangerment."

Domestic Violence Programs

Finally, I have seen steps taken by battered women's programs focused on the safety of mothers at the expense of their children's safety. It is not often recognized that over half the residents in battered women's shelters are children (Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 1996; Minnesota Department of Corrections, 1993; New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women, 1992). Many shelters do offer comprehensive "in-house" and school-based services to children associated with the women using their services. But in many programs these services are minimal. I have found that there is also unwillingness among some battered women's advocates to address mother's use of violence against her children and to make required reports of child maltreatment to the appropriate authorities.

The hesitation of battered women's advocates to discuss women's violence and make mandatory reports is understandable to some degree. An admission of a woman's use of violence may turn all attention away from the male perpetrator's much more dangerous violence and reinforce those who incorrectly argue that women are as violent as men. Given the child protection agency practices discussed earlier, it is also no wonder that shelters are not major reporters of child maltreatment, despite legal mandates.

Unfortunately, this situation leads to many missed opportunities to ensure the safety of children residing in shelters, and indirectly the safety of their mothers as well. Rather than avoiding these systems, battered women's advocates must engage juvenile courts and child protection systems with all the energy that led them to work with criminal courts and police departments over a decade ago. These systems also can change, as evidenced by the many collaborative projects emerging around the country.

Our systems for providing safety to child and adult victims of family violence are currently fragmented and often working at cross-purposes. Sometimes the unintended outcomes of our interventions lead me to throw my hands up in frustration. Most of the time, however, such results make me more determined than ever to seek solutions which provide all victims of family violence the support they require, especially from the courts, child protection agencies, and domestic violence programs.

We need systems that work for the safety of all family members who are victimized. We need systems that hold abusers accountable and do not place unfair burdens on their victims, regardless of their age. Fortunately, a number of collaborative efforts are emerging around the country which directly address these failures of our complex intervention systems. These include programs in which criminal and juvenile courts are collaborating with child protection and domestic violence programs in order to see that both abused mothers and their maltreated children find greater safety. This focus on safety for all victims of violence should be the goal of each of these systems and of our collective efforts.

REFERENCES

Hangen, E. (1994). D.S.S. Interagency Domestic Violence Team Pilot Project: Program data evaluation. Boston, MA: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Social Services.

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV)(1996). Annual Report - FY 1995. Springfield, IL: author.

Minnesota Department of Corrections (1993). Battered Women's Programs: Data Summary for FY93. St. Paul, MN: author.

New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women (NJCBW)(1992). Annual Report - 1991. Trenton, NJ: author.

Oregon Children's Services Division (1993). Task Force Report on Child Fatalities and Critical Injuries Due to Abuse and Neglect. Salem, OR: Oregon Department of Human Resources.

Pecora, P.J., Whittaker, J.K., Maluccio, A.N., Barth, R.P. and Plotnick, R.D. (1992). The child welfare challenge: Policy, practice, and research. New York, NY: Aldine De Gruyter.

By Katheryn Yetter, JD

Moving Beyond 'Failure to Protect

Finding creative, supportive and effective ways to manage the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child abuse is a challenge for most communities. Several years ago, the state of West Virginia tackled this challenge with an innovative collaborative effort modeled after the *Greenbook*[2] approach of working across systems. A statewide panel, the Domestic Violence/Child Victimization Study and Policy Workgroup, examined the cross training and policy analysis practices of the child protection system, the domestic violence advocacy network, the court and legal system, and community prevention and intervention services.

> "It is truly exciting to see CPS workers finally able to partner with adult victims to empower them to protect their children, rather than have no choice but to force children through the trauma of removals to foster care. That can now be prevented."
> - Catherine Munster, JD

The workgroup determined that when a child's exposure to domestic violence rose to the level of child abuse, the state had only two options - find both parents at fault for the child maltreatment, or leave the protective parent out of the case and proceed with a case against the abusive parent. The state did not have a way to intervene in the lives of both parents without accusing the adult victim of unfit behavior (*i.e.*, failure to protect). A series of discussions resulted in an innovative statewide approach to Child Protective Services (CPS) cases involving domestic violence. The state implemented several changes, including: (1) the adult victim and the state may now co-petition the court to bring the child within their jurisdiction; (2) if co-petitioning is not the best option, the state may request a no-fault battered parent adjudication; and (3) the term "failure to protect" was eliminated from all agency policies.

It should be noted that in West Virginia, and most other states, the vast majority of CPS cases are not in the court system. The co-petition and no-fault options typically are seen only in the most egregious cases of abuse.

Joining Forces

If the adult victim is not at fault for abusing or neglecting the child, but the child was abused to the extent that a child abuse/neglect petition is warranted, CPS will now consider co-petitioning with the adult victim against the abusing par In West Virginia, CPS has a policy of partner with parents who are trying to protect their dren. Co-petitioning was found to be one wa assist and provide services to these parents. petitioners have their own counsel and keep legal and physical custody of the children wh the batterer proceeds through the legal proce up to and including termination of parental rights. In co-petition cases, it is essential befc moving forward that the victim parent feel sa from the abuser because the victim parent wi be asked to identify the abuser in the petition and to admit that child abuse did occur.

The No-Fault Option

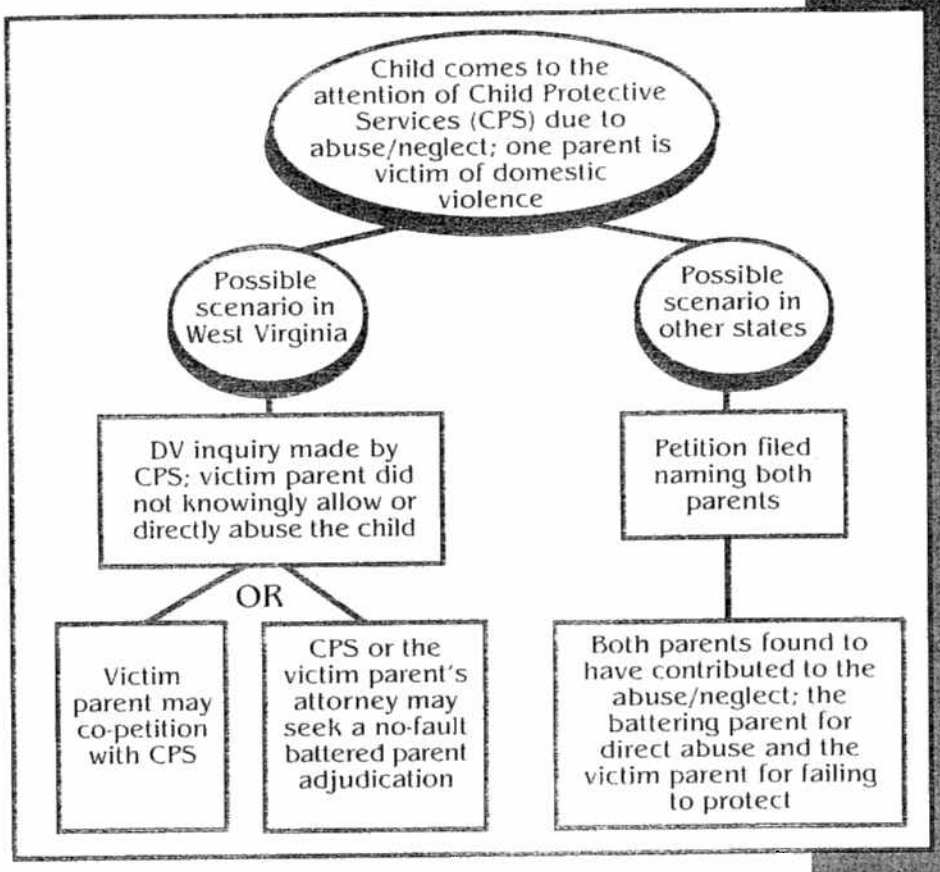
If the adult victim does not want to or is afra to co-petition with the state, CPS can file a pe tion with both parents[3] as respondents. CPS t requests a no-fault battered parent adjudicatic The battered parent and child are provided su port services while the batterer proceeds through the dependency process for creating harm to the child. Sanctions such as terminati of parental rights for the no-fault adjudicated battered parent occurs only if parenting skills seriously impaired and the parent refuses or is unable to cooperate with a reasonable treatme plan.

In both the co-petition and no-fault options, petition is filed against the batterer for doing harm to the child. The victim parent is not hel responsible for failing to protect the child from the abuser. In fact, the term "failure to protect" has never been in West Virginia code – the lan guage in the code that addresses this concept refers to parents who "intentionally, knowingly allow a third party to abuse their child. In domestic violence cases, the state analyzes whether the abuse was intentionally or knowir ly allowed by assessing whether the victim par ent took steps to protect the child that were rea sonable considering the threat the victim parer faced from the abuser. Again, responsibility fo harm to a child is placed squarely on the batterer.

Generally, victim parents can go to one of tw court systems to seek redress from battering ar legal protection for their children, juvenile cour

in West Virginia[1]

or family court. Some parents feared going to juvenile court because it required governmental intervention and a sometimes less-than-helpful child protective services system. However, Catherine Munster, a private attorney who was instrumental in implementing West Virginia's collaborative process, said the changes instituted in West Virginia resulted in "a complete paradigm shift about how we look at the duty of child protective services to protect children and not leave the abused parent out to flounder in a private custody case." She said that judges joined the effort to revamp West Virginia's CPS system because they were concerned that serious allegations of child abuse were being prosecuted by *pro se* protective parents in family court. Judges felt that these parents were in the wrong court for such serious allegations of child abuse.



Once the systemic changes were made in West Virginia, their impact was measured and monitored through court improvement projects and by the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Because training within all systems was identified as critical to the success of the program, an in-service curriculum was piloted to address such issues as what happens when domestic violence rises to the level of child abuse, when the trauma coping mechanism of accommodation takes on the appearance of condoning child abuse, practical applications of co-petitioning and battered parent adjudication, working with victims of domestic violence who also abuse or neglect children, and working with batterers. According to Ms. Munster, "It is truly exciting to see CPS workers finally able to partner with adult victims to empower them to protect their children, rather than have no choice but to force children through the trauma of removals to foster care. That can now be prevented."

For more information on the West Virginia initiative, please contact Joyce Yedlosky, protective services coordinator at the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, at (304) 965-3552.

For more information about cross-system collaboration, please visit the *Greenbook* website at http://www.thegreenbook.info.

1 The Family Violence Department thanks Joyce Yedlosky, protective services coordinator, West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and Catherine Munster, JD, Of Counsel with McNeer, Highland McMunn and Varner, LC, for their substantial contributions to the writing of this article.
2 Susan Schechter & Jeffrey Edleson, NCJFCJ, *Effective Intervention in Domestic Violence & Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice* (1999) available at http://www.thegreenbook.info.
3 In some limited circumstances, co-petitions may be filed with a non-parent as the respondent (*e.g.*, boyfriend or girlfriend).
4 In a no-fault battered parent adjudication, it is judicially determined that the victim parent neither condoned the abuse/neglect nor was not able to stop the abuse/neglect of the child due to being a victim of domestic violence.

Catherine Munster, an attorney who was instrumental in the West Virginia collaborative, said the changes instituted in West Virginia resulted in "a complete paradigm shift about how we look at the duty of child protective services to protect children and not leave the abused parent out to flounder in a private custody case."

SYNERGY

The Newsletter of the Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES

Family Violence Department
(800) 527-3223 • www.ncjfcj.org

This document was developed under grant number 90EV0378 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The points of view expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the official position of HHS.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUVENILE
AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES
University of Nevada, Reno
P.O. Box 8970
Reno, Nevada 89507

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RENO, NV
PERMIT NO. 122

**********AUTO**ALL FOR ADC 481
Jennifer O'dell
Resource Center Coordinator
Michigan Resource Center
3893 Okemos Rd Ste B2
Okemos, MI 48864-4209

5 67

Volume 13 • No. 1
Winter 2009

By Z. Ruby White

Tapping Innate Resilience in Children

Increasingly, the spotlight is focusing on research demonstrating that exposure to domestic violence may have serious implications for the well-being of children. Numerous studies document the prevalence of and impact on children who witness domestic violence and provide evidence of the psychological, emotional, cognitive functioning, and longer term developmental problems associated with children's exposure to the assaults of one parent by another.[1]

However, the research also shows that most children exposed to domestic violence do not demonstrate adverse impact[2] and some show even higher competence;[3] that each child's experiences, perceptions, and responses to domestic violence are unique, and many variables need to be considered when assessing the impact;[4] and that interventions should provide children with protection against the risks they face in a way that is tailored to the needs of the individual child.

This article provides an overview of what current research and practice identify as specific elements of a child's environment that can serve as supportive factors and that should be used to inform appropriate interventions by professionals in the field.

What is less clear is how to appreciate the composition, drama, and prose of each child's experience in order to design effective interventions, recognizing that many factors in a child's life remain supportive even in the face of violence. This article provides an overview of what current research and practice identify as specific elements of a child's environment that can serve as supportive factors and that should be used to inform appropriate interventions by professionals in the field.

Capturing the Complete Story

Identifying the factors that may facilitate success for children exposed to domestic violence requires that professionals capture the child's complete story. To do so involves assessing each child's unique experiences, needs, strengths, challenges, wishes, and life context. In addition, it is important that prevention and intervention systems examine their own values, conceptions, perspectives, and ability to listen and exchange ideas in order to support children by sending positive messages and providing relief in ways that contribute to their safety, physiological, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs.[5]

Moreover, meeting the needs of children exposed to domestic violence necessitates an understanding that there is a great deal of variability in children's exposure to and experiences associated with domestic violence, as well as the impact of those experiences. All children exposed to stress, trauma, or violence do not necessarily show negative results. Longitudinal studies reveal time and again that 50 percent to 75 percent of children growing up in families suffering from domestic violence, as well as exposed to other risks, defeat the odds and turn a life that appears destined for further hardship into one that illustrates resilience and triumph.[6]

Environmental Factors as Building Blocks

To determine what children from violent homes need requires us to examine thoroughly the environmental factors that have been found to be both a source of strength and a source of risk for children. These factors include:

- the level of violence;[7]
- the causes, nature, and extent of risk;[8]
- whether or not the child is or has also been a victim of abuse;[9]
- how much time has passed since the exposure, because the impact of immediate turmoil may temporarily escalate a child's problems and appear to have a greater effect;[10]
- the child's characteristics such as age and gender, since boys and girls are widely found to exhibit different problems and the impact cannot be assessed without considering developmental levels which contribute to their understanding, and coping abilities;[11] and
- environmental factors unique to that child such as individual coping skills, relationships, and social support.

When environmental factors are labeled as protective, there is a tendency to assess which children possess such characteristics, rather than recognizing that all individuals have an innate capacity for growth in the presence of such environmental factors.[12] What is more helpful to children is to conceptualize environmental factors as potential building blocks, or as basic elements or components of development, that can be nurtured in a way that will lead to positive outcomes.

Some of these potential building blocks are discussed in detail below.

A secure attachment to a non-violent parent, caregiver, or other significant adult

The most important protective resource to enable a child to cope with exposure to domestic violence is a strong relationship with a competent, caring, positive adult— most often a parent.[13] A 1997 study examined the life histories of women who had achieved professional and personal success and who were all adult daughters of battered women.[14] Each woman described a childhood filled with frequent tension, unhappiness, and fear; but the common factor in all of the women "was a supportive adult—oftentimes the battered woman herself—who was able to mediate the damaging effects of a violent home."[15] A close bond with an effective parent is related to better outcomes among children with ordinary lives as well as those who face domestic violence, child maltreatment, or multifaceted high risk. Outcomes for children are greatly enhanced by facilitating the child's relationship with the effective parent or other significant adult.

- **Children's belief about their own success[16]**

Children's beliefs are influenced by others' perceptions about their ability to succeed. Only recently, experts are coming to understand that children may be better served by interventions that incorporate a "challenge" model of resilience, which recognizes that children are impacted by family dynamics in ways that are both positive and negative.[17] In families where there is abuse or multiple problems, professionals can work with children in a way that helps them to identify and capitalize on their strengths instead of highlighting why they are destined to fail or be "at-risk." While society may find it useful to label "high-risk" children, such labeling is extremely problematic because it may negatively affect children's perceptions of their ability.

- **High achievement in one or more areas[18]**

It is important to identify and nurture unique individual abilities. Good problem-solving skills, outstanding school performance and involvement, above average intelligence, and exceptional athletic ability and involvement in sports are examples of some of the ways children express their talents and abilities, and can be tapped into in order to create a fertile environment for successful development.

- **Peers[19]**

Peers can provide motivation for increasing a child's involvement in positive programs, activities, and leadership opportunities; serve as protective or pro-social models; and provide emotional support. Programs and interventions should work with children's peers, who can be allies in education, prevention, and solutions. However, programs and interventions must recognize that grouping deviant peers together may be counterproductive.[20]

- **Access to health, education, housing, social services, and employment for the family[21]**

Families often "fail" as a result of the way systems conduct business. One of the reasons for the lack of success may be the lack of comprehensive assessments of what families need. When a problem is identified and addressed independent of other problems family members may have, the result may be a determination that all family members need the same services. Furthermore, families that have divergent needs may be referred to undifferentiated services because those are the only options available. Families are then often referred to multiple systems and organizations, with little or no coordination among the services provided. However, the issues many families face are not fragmented; they come together as a whole and should be addressed as such. Assessing families' needs includes recognizing multiple issues, such as poverty, environmental quality, and overcrowded and sub-standard schools and

Continued on page 6

Tapping Innate Resilience ... (cont)

Continued from page 5

housing—all of which can be affected by direct or indirect discrimination. Access to health, education, housing, social services, and employment for the family can help lead to positive outcomes.

- **Social support**

  A recent study examined the impact of social support in the lives of 80 children between the age of seven and 11 years, whose mothers had experienced partner violence in the last four months.[22] The results revealed that social support, specifically the number of people in the children's lives who cared about, listened to, and could be counted on by the children, was positively correlated to children's adjustment and self-esteem and also positively moderated the correlation between the violence witnessed and the children's behavioral adjustment.

  Moreover, families may have unique social supports, particularly in communities of color, that help to protect family members, such as involved extended family, participation in church or religious activities, strong identification with their racial group, and close attachments within their ethnic community. The most helpful interventions, therefore, create environments with the flexibility to meet the unique social and cultural dynamics, as well as the mix of risk conditions and strengths, of each child.

- **A strong cultural identity and ethnic pride[23]**

  Children need to have a sense of pride in every distinction that goes into making them the individuals they are. Children of color are exposed to stresses that can affect any child, but also experience other sources of stress related to racism, discrimination, and possible dislocated family background.[24] Programs and interventions should contribute to their development by highlighting the way their people, values, traditions, and social supports include important cultural contributions, positive gender roles, and an enriched or responsive social environment. Such services should also incorporate an understanding that different children and families in a given community or culture may have different values and expectations for success and competence. Interventions should acknowledge, respect, and include diversity in a way that does not ignore differences in life context.

In particular, the life context of communities of color introduces many unique factors that need to be considered in domestic violence interventions.[25] Some of these may include:

- biases in delivery of services by the criminal justice systems;
- mistrust of mainstream formal systems;
- overrepresentation of children and families of color in the child welfare and justice systems;
- under-representation of people of color among service providers and in positions of leadership;
- formal systems that do not include relevant or alternative resources;
- the balance between disproving stereo-typical beliefs that only poor, minority women are battered and pushing them aside to focus on victims for whom the dominant culture will be more likely to express concern; and
- other possible personal and cultural barriers, present outside of communities of color as well, which may include elements such as intense loyalty to the extended family, deference to individual needs for family unity and strength, religious beliefs or spirituality, social unacceptability of separation or divorce, concentration in low paying jobs, language barriers and immigration issues, privacy and self-blame seen as virtues to maintain family honor, unfamiliar and uncomfortable surroundings, and tremendous within-group diversity.

Longitudinal studies reveal time and time again that 50 percent to 75 percent of children growing up in families suffering from domestic violence, as well as exposure to other risks, defeat the odds and turn a life that appears destined for further hardship into one that illustrates resilience and triumph.

Applying the Lessons Learned from Children

The experiences of children demonstrating resiliency in the face of domestic violence require further exploration to observe, discover, and learn more about all of the nuances that combine to create positive rather than negative outcomes. Looking for the factors described above in our assessments of children's and families' needs will advance a strengths-based approach to interventions with children exposed to domestic violence, rather than one that looks for factors which automatically label children "high-risk." In order to create a nurturing environment for children that will allow them to flourish, we need to believe in their capacity and enhance, not minimize, the critical building blocks in each child's life through careful, creative, and differential solutions.

Only after we learn to appreciate the composition, drama, and prose of each child's experience in growing up in a violent home can the best possible decisions for individual women, children, and families be made; because the lessons learned from children tell us that the solutions are different for everyone. Only then will we be able to look at the faces of our society and see fewer children who have suffered abuse or maltreatment, hid in closets, or drifted off to sleep with a lullaby of shrieks and broken glass. Only when we learn to recognize, respect, and integrate each child's unique experiences into prevention and intervention services and conceptualize environmental factors as building blocks will we be able to tap into and support their resiliency.

---

[1] For a review of these studies see Edleson, J. L. (1999). Children's witnessing of adult domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14 (8)*, 839-870.

[2] Laing, L. (2000). *Children, young people, and domestic violence*. Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, 5.

[3] Jaffe, P., Wolfe, D., & Wilson, S. (1990). *Children of battered women*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 73.

[4] See for e.g. Edleson, J.L. (1999). *Problems associated with children's witnessing of domestic violence* (revised). Violence Against Women Online Resources.

[5] For more information on Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs see Maslow, A. H. (1987). *Motivation and personality, 3rd edition*. New York: Harper & Row.

[6] Bernard, B. (1995). Fostering resilience in children. *ERIC Digest*, 1.

[7] Spears, L. (2000). *Building bridges between domestic violence organizations and child protective services* (revised). Violence Against Women Online Resources, 22.

[8] *Id.* Appendix A.

[9] *Supra*, note 1.

[10] *Id.*

[11] *Id.*

[12] *Supra*, note 7.

[13] Osofsky, J. D. (1999). The impact of violence on children. *The Future of Children: Domestic Violence and Children, 9 (3)*, 38.

[14] Evangelista, A. (1999). Shedding childhood scars of violence. *The Science of Caring Magazine*, www.ucsf.edu/daybreak/1990/07/09_violence.html (highlighting the 1997 study).

[15] *Id.*

[16] See for e.g. Henderson, V. L., & Dweck, C. S. (1990). Motivation and achievement. In S. S. Feldman & G. R. Elliot (Ed.). *At the threshold: the developing adolescent* (pp. 308-329). Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; Skinner, E. A. (1995). *Perceived control, motivation and coping*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, and several other studies.

[17] Biscoe, B. (1999). *A closer look at resilience: rebounding from the pain of the past*, 1.

[18] See for e.g. Masten, A. S. & Coatsworth, J. D. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: lessons from research on successful children. *American Psychologist, 53*, 205-220); and Neighbors, B., Forehand, R., & McVicar, D. (1993). Resilient adolescents and interparental conflict. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 63*, 462-471.

[19] See for e.g. Hartup, W. W. (1996). The company they keep: friendships and their developmental significance. *Child Development, 67*, 1-13.

[20] See for e.g. Dishion, T.J., McCord, J., & Poulin, F. (1999). When interventions harm: peer groups and problem behavior. *American Psychologist, 54 (9)*, 755-764.

[21] See for e.g. Grotberg, E. H. (1995). A guide to promoting resilience in children: strengthening the human spirit. *Early Childhood Development Practice and Reflections*. Bernard Van Leer Foundation; and Dwivedi, K. N. (1997). *Enhancing parenting skills*. Chichester: Wiley Publications.

[22] Shpungin, E. (1999). *Master's thesis: social support as a protective factor in the lives of children exposed to domestic violence*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.

[23] Simmons, K. (1999). *Pathways to prevention: developmental and early intervention approaches to crime in Australia*. National Crime Prevention, Attorney-Generals Department, 13.

[24] Dwivedi, K. N. (1999). Introduction, *Meeting the needs of ethnic minority children*. Second Edition. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley.

[25] For further exploration see Valazquez, J., McPhatter, A. R., & Yang, K. (Ed.). (2003). Special issue perspectives on cultural competence. *Child Welfare, LXXXII (2)*; and Sen, R. (1999). Between a rock and a hard place: domestic violence in communities of color. *ColorLines, 2 (1)*.

In order to create a nurturing environment for children that will allow them to flourish, we must believe in their capacity and enhance, not minimize, the critical building blocks in each child's life through careful, creative, and different solutions.

VAWnet
Applied Research Forum
National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women

Emerging Responses to Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

Jeffrey L. Edleson

In consultation with Barbara A. Nissley

Public attention to the effects of children's exposure to adult domestic violence has increased over the last decade. This attention focuses on both the impact of the exposure on children's development and on the likelihood that exposed children may be at greater risk for becoming either a child victim of physical or sexual abuse or an adult perpetrator of domestic violence. New research, policies, and programs focused on these children have resulted. These new efforts are reviewed in this document and an argument is made that the diversity of children's experiences requires equally diverse responses from our communities.

Definitions of Domestic Violence and Exposure

Jouriles, McDonald, Norwood, and Ezell (2001) suggest that a number of issues affect how we define exposure to adult domestic violence. First, the types of domestic violence to which children are exposed may be defined narrowly as only physically violent incidents or more broadly as including additional forms of abuse such as verbal and emotional. Second, even within the narrower band of physical violence, there is controversy about whether we should define adult domestic violence as only severe acts of violence such as beatings, a broader group of behaviors such as slaps and shoves and psychological maltreatment, or a pattern of physically abusive acts (see Osthoff, 2002). Finally, despite documented differences in the nature of male-to-female and female-to-male domestic violence, should one and not the other be included in a definition when considering children's exposure to such events?

Settling on the definition of domestic violence does not settle still other definitional questions that arise. For example, how is exposure itself defined? Is it only direct visual observation of the incident? Should our definitions also include hearing the incident, experiencing the events prior to and after the event or other aspects of exposure?

Throughout this paper the phrase "exposure to adult domestic violence" will be used to describe the multiple experiences of children living in homes where an adult is using physically violent behavior in a pattern of coercion against an intimate partner. Domestic violence may be committed by same-sex partners as well as by women against men. However, the available research on child exposure almost exclusively focuses on homes where a man is committing domestic violence against an adult woman, who is most often the child's mother. Thus, unless otherwise identified, the studies reviewed here focus on heterosexual relationships in which the male is the perpetrator of violence.

The Impact of Exposure on Children

Carlson (2000) has conservatively estimated that from 10% to 20% of American children are exposed to adult domestic violence every year. Her estimate is based on a review of surveys of adults recalling their exposures as children and of teens reporting current exposures. Whatever the true number of exposed children, it is likely to be in the

*The production and dissemination of this publication was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number U1V/CCU324010-02 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC, VAWnet, or the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

many millions each year. National surveys in this country and others also indicate that it is highly likely that the severity, frequency, and chronicity of violence each child experiences vary greatly.

Recent meta-analyses -- statistical analyses that synthesize and average effects across studies -- have shown that children exposed to domestic violence exhibit significantly more problems than children not so exposed (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt & Kenny, 2003; Wolfe, Crooks, Lee, McIntyre-Smith & Jaffe, 2003). We have the most information on behavioral and emotional functioning of children exposed to domestic violence. Generally, studies using the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983) and similar measures have found children exposed to domestic violence, when compared to non-exposed children, exhibit more aggressive and antisocial (often called "externalized" behaviors) as well as fearful and inhibited behaviors ("internalized" behaviors), show lower social competence and have poorer academic performance. Kitzmann et al. (2003) also found that exposed children scored similarly on emotional health measures to children who were physically abused or who were both physically abused and exposed to adult domestic violence.

Another all too likely effect is a child's own increased use of violence. Social learning theory would suggest that children who are exposed to violence may also learn to use it. Several researchers have examined this link between exposure to violence and subsequent use of violence. For example, Singer et al. (1998) studied 2,245 children and teenagers and found that recent exposure to violence in the home was significantly associated with a child's violent behavior in the community. Jaffe, Wilson, and Wolfe (1986) have also suggested that children's exposure to adult domestic violence may generate attitudes justifying their own use of violence. Spaccarelli, Coatsworth, and Bowden's (1995) findings support this association by showing that adolescent boys incarcerated for violent crimes who had been exposed to family violence believed more than others that "acting aggressively enhances one's reputation or self-image" (p. 173). Believing that aggression would enhance one's self-image significantly predicted violent offending.

A few studies have examined longer-term problems reported retrospectively by adults or indicated in archival records. For example, Silvern et al.'s (1995) study of 550 undergraduate students found that exposure to domestic violence as a child was associated with adult reports of depression, trauma-related symptoms, and low self-esteem among women and trauma-related symptoms alone among men. They found that after accounting for the effects of being abused as a child, adult reports of their childhood exposure to domestic violence still accounted for a significant degree of their problems as adults. Exposure to domestic violence also appeared to be independent of the impacts of parental alcohol abuse and divorce. In the same vein, Henning et al. (1996) found that 123 adult women who had been exposed to domestic violence as a children showed greater distress and lower social adjustment when compared to 494 non-exposed adult women. These findings remained even after accounting for the effects of witnessing parental verbal conflict, being abused as a child, and varying degrees of parental caring.

Children's Involvement in Violent Incidents

Studies have found that children respond in a variety of ways to violent conflict between their parents. Children's involvement in violent situations has been shown to vary from their becoming actively involved in the conflict, to distracting themselves and their parents, or to distancing themselves by leaving the room (Garcia O'Hearn, Margolin, & John, 1997; Peled, 1998). Children in homes in which violence has occurred were nine times more likely to verbally or physically intervene in parental conflicts than comparison children from homes in which no violence occurred (Adamson & Thompson, 1998). Edleson et al. (2003) found that 40 of 111 battered mothers (36%) reported their children frequently or very frequently yelled to stop violent conflicts; 13 (11.7%) of the mothers reported that their children frequently or very frequently called someone for help

during a violent event; and 12 (10.8%) reported their children frequently or very frequently physically intervened to stop the violence.

More often young children appear to be present during domestic violence incidents than older children. Examining data on police and victim reports of domestic assault incidents, Fantuzzo and colleagues (Fantuzzo, et al., 1997) found that in all five cities studied, children ages 0 to 5 years were significantly more likely to be present during single and recurring domestic violence incidents. Children's responses to violent events appear to also vary with age (Cummings, Pellegrini, Notarius, & Cummings, 1989). In one early study, even children ages one to two and a half years responded to angry conflict that included physical attacks with negative emotions and efforts to become actively involved in the conflicts (Cummings, Zahn-Waxler, & Radke-Yarrow, 1981).

These findings have led many to conclude that every child exposed to domestic violence is significantly harmed by the experience. Yet, as the section below will show, many children appear to survive such exposure and show no greater problems than non-exposed children.

Protective Factors in Children's Lives

Most would be convinced by the afore mentioned studies that children exposed to adult domestic violence would all show evidence of greater problems than non-exposed children. In fact, the picture is not so clear. There is a growing research literature on children's resilience in the face of traumatic events (see, for example, Garmezy, 1974; Werner & Smith, 1992; Garmezy & Masten, 1994). The surprise in these research findings is that many children exposed to traumatic events show no greater problems than non-exposed peers, leading Masten (2001) to label such widespread resilience as "ordinary magic".

The studies of exposed children reviewed earlier compared *groups of children* who were either exposed or not exposed to adult domestic violence. The results reported were based on *group trends* and may or may not indicate an *individual* child's experience. Graham-Bermann (2001) points out that, consistent with the general trauma literature, many children exposed to domestic violence show no greater problems than children not so exposed. Several studies support this claim. For example, a study of 58 children living in a shelter and recently exposed to domestic violence found great variability in problem symptoms (Hughes & Luke, 1998). Over half the children in the study were classified as either "doing well" (n=15) or "hanging in there" (n=21). Children "hanging in there" were found to exhibit average levels of problems and self-esteem and some mild anxiety symptoms. The remaining children in the study did show more severe problems: nine showed "high behavior problems", another nine "high general distress" and four were labeled "depressed kids". In another study, Grych et al. (2000) found that of 228 shelter resident children studied, 71 exhibited no problems, another 41 showed only mild distress symptoms, 47 exhibited externalized problems, and 70 were classified as multi-problem.

How does one explain these great variations among exposed children? Both of the above studies were based on children living in battered women's shelters. On the one hand, these children may have been exposed to more severe violence than a community-resident sample of exposed children. On the other hand, shelter-resident children may also have greater protective social supports available to them when studied. There are also likely a number of protective assets and risk factors that affect the degree to which each child is influenced by violence exposures.

The resilience literature suggests that as assets in a child's environment increase, the problems he or she experiences may actually decrease (Masten & Reed, 2002). Protective adults, including the child's mother, relatives, neighbors and teachers, older siblings, and friends may all play protective roles in a child's life. The child's larger social environment may also play a protective role if extended family members or members of church, sports or social clubs with which the child is affiliated act to support or aid

the child during stressful periods. Harm that children experience may also be moderated by how a child interprets or copes with the violence (see Hughes, Graham-Bermann & Gruber, 2001). Sternberg et al. (1993) suggest that "perhaps the experience of observing spouse abuse affects children by a less direct route than physical abuse, with cognitive mechanisms playing a greater role in shaping the effects of observing violence" (p. 50).

Children also experience differing levels of other risk factors, as the following section will reveal.

Risk Factors in Children's Lives

One risk factor that leads to variation in children's experiences is the great variation in *severity, frequency, and chronicity of violence*. Research has clearly documented the great variation of violence across families (see Straus & Gelles, 1990). It is likely that every child will be exposed to different levels of violence over time. Even siblings in the same household may be exposed to differing degrees of violence depending on how much time they spend at home. Increases in violence exposure may pose greater risks for children while decreases may lessen these risks.

A number of additional factors seem to play a role in children's exposure and interact with each other creating unique outcomes for different children. For example, many children exposed to domestic violence are also exposed to other adverse experiences. In a study of 17,421 patients within a large health maintenance organization, Felitti, Anda and their colleagues (Dube, Anda, Felitti, Edwards, & Williamson, 2002) found that increasing exposure to adult domestic violence in a child's life was associated with increasing levels of other "adverse childhood experiences" such as exposure to substance abuse, mental illness, incarcerated family members and other forms of abuse or neglect. This finding points to the complexity of exposed children's lives. For example, many exposed children are also *direct victims of child abuse* (Appel & Holden, 1998; Edleson, 1999; Hughes, Parkinson, & Vargo, 1989; McClosky, Figueredo, & Koss, 1995). Again, in a study of adverse childhood experiences, Felitti, Anda and their colleagues (Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti, 2003) found that among the 8,629 HMO patients studied, men exposed to physical abuse, sexual abuse, and adult domestic violence as children were 3.8 times more likely than other men to have perpetrated domestic violence as adults.

Problems associated with exposure have been found to vary based on the *gender* and *age* of a child but *not* based on his or her race or ethnicity (Carlson, 1991; Hughes, 1988; O'Keefe, 1994; Spaccarelli et al., 1994; Stagg, Wills, & Howell, 1989). The longer the period of time since exposure to a violent event also appears to be associated with lessening problems (Wolfe, Zak, Wilson, & Jaffe; 1986).

Finally, *parenting* has also been identified as a key factor affecting how a child experiences exposure. More data are available on battered mothers and their caregiving than on perpetrators and theirs. Unfortunately, at times the over reliance on data collected from and about battered mothers may lead to partial or inaccurate conclusions. For example, it may be that the perpetrator's behavior is the key to predicting the emotional health of a child. *By not collecting data about the perpetrators, we may incorrectly conclude it is the mothers' problems and not the perpetrators' violent behavior that is creating negative outcomes for the children.*

Given this imbalance in the research, the available studies reveal that battered mothers appear to experience significantly greater levels of stress than nonbattered mothers (Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Holden et al., 1998; Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 1998) but this stress does not always translate into diminished parenting. For example, Levendosky et al. (2003) found that among the 103 battered mothers they studied many were "compensating for the violence by becoming more effective parents" (p. 275).

What little research there is on violent men shows that they have a direct impact on the parenting of mothers. For example, Holden et al. (1998) found that battered mothers, when compared to other mothers, more often altered their parenting practices in the presence of the abusive male. Mothers reported that this change in parenting

was made to minimize the men's irritability. A survey of 95 battered mothers living in the community (Levendosky, Lynch, & Graham-Bermann, 2000) indicated that their abusive partners undermined the mothers' authority with their children, making effective parenting more difficult. In an earlier qualitative study of one child support and education group program, Peled and Edleson (1995) found that fathers often pressured their children not to attend counseling when mothers were seeking help for their children. Finally, the relationship between the child and the adult perpetrator appears to influence how the child is affected by exposure. A recent study of 80 mothers residing in shelters, and 80 of their children revealed that an abusive male's relationship to a child directly affects the child's well-being, without being mediated by the mother's level of mental health (Sullivan et al., 2000). Violence perpetrated by a biological father or stepfather was found to have a greater impact on a child than the violence of nonfather figures, such as partners or ex-partners of the mother who played a minimal role in the child's life.

Public Policy Responses

Laws relating to child exposure to domestic violence have changed considerably in the last decade. These laws focus most often on criminal prosecution of violent assaults, custody and visitation decision-making, and the child welfare system's response (Lemon, 1999; Mathews, 1999; Weithorn, 2001).

Criminal prosecution of violent assaults

There are several examples of recent legislative changes in criminal statutes that directly respond to concerns about the presence of children during domestic violence assaults (see Dunford-Jackson, 2004; Weithorn, 2001). In a number of states, laws have been changed to permit misdemeanor level domestic assaults to be raised to a felony level charge. In Oregon, a domestic violence assailant can now be charged with a felony assault if a minor was present during the assault. "Presence" is defined in Oregon as in the immediate presence of or witnessed by the child. Another example of changes in criminal prosecution is legislation in at least 18 states that allows more severe sanctions to be imposed on a convicted domestic violence assailant when minors are present during the attack. Assaults committed in the presence of a minor are considered as only one factor that may influence the sanctions imposed in most of the states. Finally, Utah and at least two other states have taken a different approach by defining the presence of a minor during a domestic violence assault as cause for a separate misdemeanor charge.

On the one hand these new laws are likely to increase the attention of the police, prosecutors, and courts when children are present during domestic violence incidents. Greater sanctions are likely to be imposed when it is perceived that there is more than one victim of the adult domestic assault, namely the children. On the other hand there is concern about these changes on a number of levels (Dunford-Jackson, 2004). First, given the increasingly scarce resources of police agencies and prosecutors' offices, there is concern that attention will focus primarily on cases where children are present because of the likelihood that this factor will increase convictions or guilty pleas. One resulting fear is that children will be brought into court more often to testify in such cases. Another fear is that battered women without children will receive less attention to their cases because police and prosecutors will see them as weaker cases. Finally, many argue that if *current* criminal statutes were enforced more consistently there would not be a need for these additional laws focused on children. Finally, a particular concern about Utah's legislation is that it may be used against battered mothers for "failing to protect" their children from an assailant.

There is little research on the impact of these criminal statute changes. In one of the few studies of these laws, Whitcomb (2000) surveyed 128 prosecutors in 93 jurisdictions across the U.S. by telephone regarding their work with children exposed to violence and the impact of new laws regarding them. She also conducted face-to-face

interviews in five jurisdictions to shed more light on the telephone surveys. She found that: (1) none of the jurisdictions had protocols governing the prosecution of domestic violence and child maltreatment in the same families; (2) prosecutors in jurisdictions in which laws were in place regarding children's exposure to domestic violence were more likely to report domestic violence cases to child protection agencies, but no more likely to prosecute mothers for "failure to protect;" (3) prosecutors were seeking enhanced penalties in domestic violence cases when children were also present, even in jurisdictions where no new laws regarding children exposed to domestic violence were in place; and (4) 75% of the prosecutors interviewed said they would not report or prosecute a mother for failing to protect her children from exposure to her own victimization, and the remaining prosecutors said they would only do so when there were additional factors indicating extreme danger to the child. Whitcomb's research is clearly a starting point, but a great deal more research is needed on these law changes and both their intended and unintended consequences for battered mothers and their children.

Custody and visitation disputes

Most states now include the "presence of domestic violence" as a criterion that judges may use to determine custody and visitation arrangements when disputed. In most jurisdictions, here and in other Western countries, there has been an assumption that both parents have the right and ability to share custody and visitation of their children (Eriksson & Hester, 2001). In approximately about two dozen states, however, this presumption has been reversed in what are commonly referred to as "rebuttable presumption" statutes. Rebuttable presumption statutes generally state that when domestic violence is present it is against the best interests of the child for the documented perpetrator to be awarded custody until his or her safety with the child is assured. California Family Code is an example of a rebuttable presumption statute. Under § 3044 "there is a rebuttable presumption that an award of sole or joint physical or legal custody of a child to a person who has perpetrated domestic violence is detrimental to the best interest of the child." California's code outlines six factors to consider in assessing whether a perpetrator of domestic violence has overcome this presumption, including no new violence or violations of existing orders and successful completion of assigned services such as batterer intervention and substance abuse programs.

One difficulty in applying rebuttable presumption statutes is defining what evidence of domestic violence will be admitted as part of the custody and visitation decision-making process. Is it a past or present arrest or restraining order? Should it be a prior conviction or guilty plea? In a rebuttable presumption statute passed by the State of Wisconsin's Legislature and signed into law in February of 2004, *guardians ad litem* are given the responsibility for investigating all accusations of domestic violence and reporting their conclusions to the judge. The new law instructs judges to make domestic violence their top priority by stating that "if the courts find...that a parent has engaged in a pattern or serious incident of interspousal battery [as described in statutes], or domestic abuse, the safety and well-being of the child and the safety of the parent who was the victim of the battery or abuse shall be the paramount concerns in determining legal custody and periods of physical placement" (Wisconsin Act 130, §25, 767.24(5)). The new law also requires training of all *guardians ad litem* and custody mediators in assessing domestic violence and its impact on adult victims and children and lays out new procedures for safe mediation.

While legislative developments such as rebuttable presumption laws appear to be positive, there is little or no evaluation of their impact on children's and non-abusive parents' safety. There also are a number of other critical issues that remain mostly unattended in custody and visitation decisions that involve domestic violence. Part of the problem is that many battered mothers are self-represented in disputed custody cases. This raises concerns about both safety for the adult victims and the degree to

which they are well represented in court proceedings.

Poor representation for adult victims, or even raising the issue of domestic violence in court proceedings, may compound in a number of ways with other outcomes that can disadvantage her, for example: (1) the abuser or his legal counsel accusing the mother of purposefully alienating her children from him using empirically questionable concepts such as Parental Alienation Syndrome (Faller, 1998); (2) using "friendly parent" provisions of custody statutes to accuse a mother concerned about her and her children's safety of being uncooperative; (3) minimizing the impact of adult domestic violence exposure on children's safety and well-being; (4) inappropriately using standardized psychological tests that have not been developed to assess domestic violence to question the veracity of battered women's testimony or her parenting abilities; and (5) appointing custody evaluators or mediators, *guardians ad litem*, and court appointed special advocates (CASAs) who have little training on issues of domestic violence to assess families and advise the court on custody and visitation arrangements. These issues may further disadvantage battered mothers who are not represented by an attorney and in cases where the abuser persistently uses court actions to extend his control or harassment of her.

Again, as with changes in criminal statutes, there is little research on these law changes in the domain of custody and visitation. Kernic et al. (2005) studied 324 divorcing couples with a documented history of domestic violence to 532 divorcing couples with no such history. They found that even if domestic violence is a criterion for deciding on custody and visitation, it does not seem to change court outcomes. Court records failed to identify documented domestic violence in almost half of the cases, and in approximately another quarter allegations were noted but not documented despite available evidence. Battered mothers were no more likely than others to be awarded custody of their children and violent fathers were seldom denied visitation. In another recent study, Morrill et al. (2005) reviewed 393 custody and visitation orders involving domestic violence across six states and surveyed 60 judges. They found that in most jurisdictions when a rebuttable presumption was in place, that battered mothers more often received custody and violent fathers were more often given scheduled and restricted visitation with their children. This was true except in jurisdictions where "friendly parent" and/or presumptions of joint custody were also in place creating a contradictory legal environment.

Child welfare regulations

Finally, some states have approached child exposure by expanding the definitions of child maltreatment to include children who have been exposed to domestic violence. For example, in 1999, the Minnesota State Legislature expanded the definition of child neglect in the Maltreatment of Minors Reporting Act to include exposure to adult domestic violence as a specific type of neglect (Minn. State Ann. §626.556, see Minnesota Department of Human Services, 1999; see Edleson, Gassman-Pines, & Hill, 2006). The change in Minnesota acknowledged what had long been believed to be the practice in many child protection agencies across the country - accepting certain reports of children's exposure to adult domestic violence as child neglect.

This change in Minnesota's definition of child neglect to include children exposed to domestic violence meant that the state was suddenly mandating that a range of professionals report every child they suspected had witnessed adult domestic violence. A survey of 52 Minnesota counties estimated that the language change would generate 9,101 new domestic violence exposure reports to be screened by child protection agencies each year (Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators, 2000), a greater than 50% increase over current levels. While exact figures are not available, the change in definition resulted in rapidly rising child maltreatment reports across Minnesota. This relatively simple change resulted in dramatically increasing workloads in most Minnesota county

child protection agencies. Though legislators thought the language change would merely clarify existing practices, many county agencies suddenly faced huge numbers of newly defined neglected children being reported to them.

The increase in child maltreatment reports created significant problems for many county agencies. There were two parts to this change that raised particular concerns among county social service administrators. First, current Minnesota law required an immediate response to all child maltreatment reports. Second, there was no specific funding appropriated to implement this change. Social service administrators argued that the change represented an "unfunded mandate" by the Legislature. Child protection workers already felt their agencies were inadequately supported and the large increase of reports threatened to stretch some counties beyond their capacity to respond. As current and former child protection workers explained, there was a wide range of children that were swept up by the legislation, some of whom were very much in need of child protective services, and others who needed services but not those of child protection.

The expanded reporting requirements also raised concerns among advocates for battered women who feared that as a result of the new definition child protective services would utilize methods that would blame more mothers for their male partners' violent behavior toward her by finding her case as substantiated for "failure to protect" (see Magen, 1999). This very issue was the focus of a recent class action lawsuit against the City of New York's child protection agency. The court found that the City had unconstitutionally removed children from the custody of their non-abusive battered mothers after substantiating mothers for *engaging in domestic violence*. Engaging in domestic violence often simply meant being a victim at the hands of an adult male perpetrator (*Nicholson v. Williams*).

Minnesota's story really had two endings, both of which were frustrating and raise questions about an appropriate response to these families. In the first ending, the community responded to the expanded definition of neglect by reporting many thousands of newly identified Minnesota children exposed to domestic violence. Unfortunately, the capacity of child protective services to respond was greatly strained, resulting in more identification and screening but probably fewer services to those most in need. In the second ending, almost all Minnesota counties decided to drop the requirement for reporting exposed children to child protective services after the Legislature repealed the change. The sad outcome of this result is that many thousands of children who were earlier identified were no longer visible in the systems and also not likely to receive needed services (see Edleson, Gassman-Pines, & Hill, 2006, for a more completed discussion of Minnesota's experience).

Many communities around the country have attempted to change the way they respond to battered women and their children as a reaction to experiences similar to those outlined throughout this section. Below, some of the more noteworthy responses are reviewed.

Implications for Practice Responses

The implications of these research findings and some of the states' experiences with legislation suggest several key points:

- Children's social environments and experiences vary greatly;
- The impact of exposure also varies greatly, even within the same families;
- Children have a variety of protective and risk factors present in their lives; and
- This varied group of children deserves a varied response from our communities

It is clear from the available research that children exposed to adult domestic violence are not a monolithic group. The frequency, severity, and chronicity of violence in their families, their own level of exposure to this violence, children's own ability to cope with stressful situations, and the multiple

protective factors present (e.g. a protective battered mother) as well as the multiple risks present (e.g. substance abuse or mental illness among caregivers) create a group of children who are as varied as their numbers. These many factors combine in unique ways for each child, likely creating unique impacts as a result of exposure.

Child exposure should not be automatically considered child maltreatment under the law and our current responses may not match the needs of families precisely because there are such varied impacts among children. Certainly many children will be referred to child protection agencies because of direct attacks on them. Given the limited resources of most public child welfare agencies, families and their children who show minimum evidence of harm resulting from such exposure and who have other protective factors present in their lives may benefit more from voluntary services in the non-profit sector.

Many of these children will enter our child protection systems because they are abused children and in disproportionate numbers based on race and class. Child protection systems must re-examine their responses to families in which both children and adults are being abused. Every effort must be made to keep children with their non-abusing caregivers, provide safety resources for both adult and child victims in a family, and develop new methods for intervening with men who both batter their adult partners and the children in their homes. Federal and privately funded efforts are underway to test new ways of collaborative work between child protection systems, the courts, and domestic violence organizations (see http://www.thegreenbook.info). Alternative or differential response initiatives within child protection systems may, in part, provide an additional avenue for providing more voluntary services to the lower risk cases (Sawyer & Lohrbach, 2005).

Perhaps the greater challenge is to develop voluntary systems of care for children who are exposed to domestic violence but not themselves direct victims of physical abuse. These systems of care often operate outside of child protection agencies and allow communities to rely on more than one type of response, thereby avoiding overwhelming the child protection system. Such responses include expanded programming within domestic violence organizations, partnerships with community-based organizations, and new types of "child witness to violence" projects around the country (see Drotar et al., 2003). Many of these programs stress the importance of mothers in their children's healing and encourage mother-child dyadic interventions (see Groves, Roberts, & Weinreb, 2000; Lieberman, Van Horn, & Ippen, 2005). These systems of care need to be developed as part of the fabric of communities from which the women and children come if they are to be sustained and culturally proficient.

Beyond treatment, there is a dire need to begin efforts that engage community members in taking part in community wide prevention. Developing the capacity of formal and informal systems to understand the social roots of domestic violence, to promote batterer accountability, and to better respond to cultural differences are all important benefits that may be derived from community engagement. Greater community engagement and system coordination also offer the possibility of overcoming institutional barriers that commonly stand in the way of creating safety for battered mothers and their children.

Communities across North America are significantly revising the way they think about children exposed to domestic violence. At local, county and state levels, communities are engaged in a variety of policy and programmatic actions to respond to these children and their families. The recently reauthorized federal Violence Against Women Act of 2005 for the first time addresses the needs of these children. We need to continue to develop multiple pathways into services and multiple responses by social institutions if we are to adequately address the needs of these children and help them to grow into emotionally and physically healthy adults.

Author of this document:
Jeffrey L. Edleson, Ph.D.
Director, Minnesota Center Against Violence & Abuse
Professor, School of Social Work
University of Minnesota
jedleson@umn.edu

Consultant:
Barbara A. Nissley, M.H.S.
Children's Program Specialist
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence
ban@pcadv.org

Suggested Citation: Edleson, J.L. (2006, October). *Emerging Responses to Children Exposed to Domestic Violence*. Harrisburg, PA: VAWnet, a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence/Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Retrieved month/day/year, from: http://www.vawnet.org

References

Achenbach, T.M., & Edelbrock, C. (1983). *Manual for the child behavior checklist and revised child behavior profile*. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont Department of Psychiatry.

Adamson, J.L., & Thompson, R.A. (1998). Coping with interparental verbal conflict by children exposed to spouse abuse and children from nonviolent homes. *Journal of Family Violence, 13*, 213-232.

Appel, A.E., & Holden, G.W. (1998). The co-occurrence of spouse and physical child abuse: A review and appraisal. *Journal of Family Psychology, 12*. 578-599.

Carlson, B.E. (1991). Outcomes of physical abuse and observation of marital violence among adolescents in placement. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 6*. 526-534.

Carlson, B.E. (2000). Children exposed to intimate partner violence: Research findings and implications for intervention. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse, 1*(4). 321-342.

Cummings, E.M., Zahn-Waxler, C.,& Radke-Yarrow, M. (1981). Young children's responses to expressions of anger and affection by others in the family. *Child Development, 52*. 1274-1282.

Cummings, J.S., Pellegrini, D.S., Notarius, C.I., & Cummings, E.M. (1989). Children's responses to angry adult behavior as a function of marital distress and history of interparental hostility. *Child Development, 60*. 1035-1043.

Drotar, D. Flannery, D., Day, E., Friedman, S., Creeden, R., Gartland, H., et al. (2003). Identifying and responding to the mental health service needs of children who have experienced violence: A community-based approach. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry; 8*(2). 187-203.

Dube, S.R., Anda, R.F., Felitti, V.J., Edwards, V.J., & Williamson, D.F. (2002). Exposure to abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction among adults who witnessed intimate partner violence as children: Implications for health and social services. *Violence and Victims, 17*, 3-17.

Dunford-Jackson, B.L. (2004). The role of family courts in domestic violence: The US experience. In P.G. Jaffe, L.L. Baker, & A. Cunningham, (Eds.), *Ending domestic violence in the lives of children and parents: Promising practices for safety, healing, and prevention* (pp. 188-199). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Edleson, J.L. (1999). The overlap between child maltreatment and woman battering. *Violence Against Women, 5*(2). 134-154.

Edleson, J.L., Mbilinyi, L.F., Beeman, S.K., & Hagemeister, A.K. (2003). How children are involved in adult domestic violence: Results from a four city telephone survey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18*(1), 18-32.

Edleson, J.L., Gassman-Pines, J., & Hill, M.B. (2006). Defining child exposure to domestic violence as neglect: Minnesota's difficult experience. *Social Work, 51*(2), 167-174.

Eriksson, M., & Hester, M. (2001). Violent men as good enough fathers. *Violence Against Women, 7*, 779-798.

Faller, K. (1998). The parental alienation syndrome: What is it and what data support it? *Child Maltreatment, 3*, 100-115.

Fantuzzo, J., Boruch, R., Beriama, A., Atkins, M., & Marcus, S. (1997). Domestic violence and children: Prevalence and risk in five major U.S. cities. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 36*(1), 116–22.

Garcia O'Hearn, H., Margolin, G., & John, R.S. (1997). Mothers' and fathers' reports of children's reactions to naturalistic marital conflict. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 36*, 1366-1373.

Garmezy, N. (1974). The study of competence in children at risk for severe psychopathology. In E.J. Anthony & C. Koupernik (Eds.), *The child in his family: Vol. 3. Children at psychiatric risk* (pp. 77-97). New York: Wiley.

Garmezy, N., & Masten, A. (1994). Chronic adversities. In M. Rutter, E. Taylor, & L. Hersov (Eds.), *Child and adolescent psychiatry: modern approaches*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Scientific Publications.

Graham-Bermann, S.A. (2001). Designing intervention evaluations for children exposed to domestic violence: Applications of research and theory. In S.A. Graham-Bermann & J.L. Edleson (Eds.), *Domestic violence in the lives of children: The future of research, intervention, and social policy* (pp. 237-267). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Groves, B.M., Roberts, E., & Weinreb, M. (2000). *Shelter from the storm: Clinical intervention with children affected by domestic violence*. Boston, MA: Boston Medical Center.

Grych, J.H., Jouriles, E.N., Swank, P.R., McDonald, R., & Norwood, W.D. (2000). Patterns of adjustment among children of battered women. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 68*, 84-94.

Henning, K., Leitenberg, H., Coffey, P., Turner, T., & Bennett, R. T. (1996). Long-term psychological and social impact of witnessing physical conflict between parents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 11*, 35-51.

Holden, G.W., & Ritchie, K.L. (1991). Linking extreme marital discord, child rearing, and child behavior problems: Evidence from battered women. *Child Development, 62*(2), 311-327.

Holden, G.W., Stein, J.D., Ritchie, K.L., Harris, S.D., & Jouriles, E.N. (1998). Parenting behaviors and beliefs of battered women. In G.W.Holden, R. Geffner, & E.N. Jouriles (Eds.), *Children exposed to marital violence: Theory, research, and applied issues* (pp. 185-222). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Hughes, H.M. (1988). Psychological and behavioral correlates of family violence in child witness and victims. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 58*, 77-90.

Hughes, H.M., Parkinson, D., & Vargo, M. (1989). Witnessing spouse abuse and experiencing physical abuse: A "double whammy"? *Journal of Family Violence, 4*, 197-209.

Hughes, H.M., & Luke, D.A. (1998). Heterogeneity in adjustment among children of battered women. In G.W. Holden, R. Geffner, & E.N. Jouriles (Eds.). *Children exposed to marital violence* (pp. 185-221). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Hughes, H.M., Graham-Bermann, S.A., & Gruber, G. (2001). Resilience in children exposed to domestic violence. In S.A. Graham-Bermann & J.L. Edleson (Eds.), *Domestic violence in the lives of children: The future of research, intervention, and social policy* (pp. 67-90). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Jouriles, E.N., MacDonald, R., Norwood, W.D., & Ezell, E. (2001). Issues and controversies in documenting the prevalence of children's exposure to domestic violence. In S. A. Graham-Bermann (Ed.), *Domestic violence in the lives of children*, (pp. 13-34). Washington, D.C: American Psychological Association.

Kernic, M.A., Monary-Erensdorff, D.J., Koepsell, J.K., & Holt, V.L. (2005). Children in the cross-fire: Child custody determinations among couples with a history of intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women, 11*, 991-1021.

Kitzmann, K.M., Gaylord, N.K., Holt, A.R., & Kenny, E.D. (2003). Child witnesses to domestic violence: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71*, 339-352.

Lemon, N.K.D. (1999). The legal system's response to children exposed to domestic violence. *The Future of Children, 9*, 67-83.

Levendosky, A.A., & Graham-Bermann, S.A. (1998). The moderating effects of parenting stress on children's adjustment in woman-abusing families. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 13*(3), 383-397.

Levendosky, A.A., Lynch, S.M., & Graham-Bermann, S.A. (2000). Mothers' perceptions of the impact of woman abuse on their parenting. *Violence Against Women, 6*(3), 247-271.

Levendosky, A.A., Huth-Bocks, A.C., Shapiro, D.L., & Semel, M.A. (2003). The impact of domestic violence on the maternal-child relationship and preschool-age children's functioning. *Journal of Family Psychology, 17*, 275-287.

Lieberman, A.F., Van Horn, P., & Ippen, C.G. (2005). *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 44*, 1241-1248.

Magen, R.H. (1999). In the best interests of battered women: Reconceptualizing allegations of failure to protect. *Child Maltreatment, 4*, 127-135.

Masten, A.S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist, 56*, 227-238.

Masten, A.S., & Reed, M. (2002). Resilience in development. In C.R. Snyder & S.J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Mathews, M.A. (1999). The impact of federal and state laws on children exposed to domestic violence. *The Future of Children, 9*, 50-66.

McClosky, L.A., Figueredo, A.J., & Koss, M.P. (1995). The effects of systemic family violence on children's mental health. *Child Development, 66*, 1239-1261.

Minnesota Department of Human Services (1999). *Bulletin #99-68-15: Laws related to domestic violence involving children, including 1999 amendments to neglect definition in Maltreatment of Minors Act*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators [Children's Committee] (2000). *Co-occurring spouse abuse and child abuse: Domestic violence fiscal note – January 2000*. St. Paul, MN: Author.

Morrill, A.C., Dai, J., Dunn, S., Sung, I., & Smith, K. (2005). Child custody and visitation decisions when the father has perpetrated violence against the mother. *Violence Against Women, 11*(8), 1076-1107.

O'Keefe, M. (1994). Linking marital violence, mother-child/father-child aggression, and child behavior problems. *Journal of Family Violence, 9*, 63-78.

Osthoff, S. (2002). But, Gertrude, I beg to differ, a hit is not a hit is not a hit: When battered women are arrested for assaulting their partners. *Violence Against Women, 8*, 1521-1544.

Peled, E. (1998). The experience of living with violence for preadolescent children of battered women. *Youth & Society, 29*, 395-430.

Peled, E., & Edleson, J.L. (1995). Process and outcome in small groups for children of battered women. In E. Peled, P.G. Jaffe, & J.L. Edleson (Eds.), *Ending the cycle of violence: Community responses to children of battered women* (pp. 77-96). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sawyer, R., & Lohrbach, S. (2005). Integrating domestic violence intervention into child welfare practice. *Protecting Children, 20*, 62-77.

Silvern, L., Karyl, J., Waelde, L., Hodges, W.F., Starek, J., Heidt, E., & Min, K. (1995). Retrospective reports of parental partner abuse: Relationships to depression, trauma symptoms and self-esteem among college students. *Journal of Family Violence, 10*, 177-202.

Singer, M.I., Miller, D.B., Guo, S., Slovak, K., & Frierson, T. (1998). The mental health consequences of children's exposure to violence. Cleveland, OH: Cayahoga County Community Mental Health Research Institute, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University.

Spaccarelli, S., Coatsworth, J. D., & Bowden, B. S. (1995). Exposure to serious family violence among incarcerated boys: Its association with violent offending and potential mediating variables. *Violence and Victims, 10*, 163-182.

Stagg, V., Wills, G.D., & Howell, M. (1989). Psychopathology in early childhood witnesses of family violence. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 9*, 73-87.

Straus, M.A. & Gelles, R.J. (1990). *Physical violence in American families*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Sternberg, K.J., Lamb, M.E., Greenbaum, C., Cicchetti, D., Dawud, S., Cortes, R.M., Krispin, O., & Lorey, F. (1993). Effects of domestic violence on children's behavior problems and depression. *Developmental Psychology, 29*, 44-52.

Sullivan, C.M., Juras, J., Bybee, D., Nguyen, H., & Allen, N. (2000). How children's adjustment is affected by their relationships to their mothers' abusers. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15*(6), 587-602.

Weithorn, L.A. (2001). Protecting children from exposure to domestic violence: The use and abuse of child maltreatment. *Hastings Law Review, 53*(1), 1-156.

Werner, E.E., & Smith, R.S. (1992). *Overcoming the odds: High risk children from birth to adulthood*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Whitcomb, D. (2000). *Children and domestic violence: Challenges for prosecutors*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

Whitfield, C.L., Anda, R.F., Dube, S.R., & Felitti, V.J. (2003). Violent childhood experiences and the risk of intimate partner violence in adults. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18*, 166-185.

Wolfe, D.A., Zak, L., Wilson, S., & Jaffe, P. (1986). Child witnesses to violence between parents: Critical issues in behavioral and social adjustment. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 14*, 95-104.

Wolfe, D.A., Crooks, C.V., Lee, V., McIntyre-Smith, A., & Jaffe, P.G. (2003). The effects of children's exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis and critique.